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Thirteen Epistles of Plato

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Thirteen Epistles of Plato

Introduction, Translation and Notes

by

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Oxford
At the Clarendon Press
1925

5799

Oxford University Press
London Edinburgh Glasgow Copenhagen
New York Toronto Melbourne Cape Town
Bombay Calcutta Madras Shanghai
Humphrey Milford Publisher to the UNIVERSITY

Printed in England

NOTE

I TAKE this opportunity of mentioning my indebtedness to Professor Burnet of St. Andrews for valuable suggestions; to Professor Shero of St. Stephen's College in New York State, to Mr. Joseph of New College, and to Professor Ross of Oriel College for many corrections; to the readers of the Clarendon Press for the detection of numerous slips; to my colleague Professor E. D. Snyder for reading proof; and above all to Professor Rufus Jones, to whose original suggestion and constant interest is due the appearance of this translation.

L. A. POST.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
Introduction	1
Table of References	12
Chronological Table	13
Tables of Descent	14
Epistle XIII (366 B. C.)	15
Epistle II (363 B. C.)	25
Epistle XI (360 B. C.)	37
Epistle X (356 B. C.)	40
Epistle IV (356 B. C.)	41
Epistle III (356 B. C.)	44
Epistle VII (353 B. C.)	56
Epistle VIII (352 B. C.)	114
Epistle VI (350 B. C.)	127
Epistle I (spurious)	130
Epistle V (spurious)	133
Epistles IX and XII (spurious)	136
Notes	139
Index of Proper Names	161

INTRODUCTION

1. Genuineness of the Letters.

In the manuscripts of Plato that we possess a collection of thirteen letters is found, placed among the genuine works at the very end just before the spurious dialogues. The importance of the letters was recognized in ancient times. They are frequently quoted by Cicero and by Plutarch, who certainly were in touch with the best critical judgement of scholarly tradition. They were used as models in the schools of rhetoric and were treated rather as political addresses than as letters. Among scholars of the Renaissance the letters were read and appreciated. Even during the last century, when it was generally believed that the letters had been proved to be spurious, scholars of the standing of Grote and Cobet upheld the belief in their genuineness and value.

The Epistles of Plato suffer and gain by the existence of a multitude of admittedly spurious letters attributed to ancient authors or statesmen. They suffer on the one hand because the existence of so large a body of spurious material affords ample proof of the activity of forgers and of the weakness in critical judgement of those responsible for the manuscript tradition. They gain on the other hand because of the striking contrast

between the incredible ignorance and insipidity characteristic of the forged documents and the vivid and forcible style of the Platonic writings. Bentley, who exposed the false claims of the letters of Phalaris, expressed with equal vigour his conviction that the thirteenth Epistle of Plato bears all the marks of genuineness.

The question whether any of the letters are genuine is complicated by the fact that some of them are certainly not so. Like the dialogues they require special treatment to determine their claims individually. The manuscripts indicate that the twelfth letter is spurious. In the case of the first letter internal evidence is decisive against Platonic authorship. On the other hand the third, the seventh, and the eighth epistles, which are the really important ones, have held their ground against the most minute tests. Hostile criticism of their style, their historical accuracy, and their statements of philosophic doctrine was effective for a time only because it was based on incomplete investigation and in some cases on a rather mechanical treatment. Recent studies have triumphantly vindicated the claim of the letters. It would be difficult to find scholars more competent in this field than Burnet, Ritter, Wilamowitz, and Eduard Meyer; and they are united in asserting the genuineness and importance of the chief letters. Wilamowitz goes so far as to quote most appropriately: 'The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner.'

Once it is agreed that certain letters are genuine, it becomes possible to judge what is characteristic of

Plato's correspondence and to establish criteria for determining the genuineness of other letters. It was to be expected that the letters should differ in many respects from the dialogues of Plato. The three admittedly genuine letters are not, however, private correspondence like those of Cicero. They are to be compared to the *Epistles* of Paul or rather perhaps to the *Antidosis* and the *Epistles* of Isocrates. They were meant for publication, they dealt with a contemporary situation for contemporaries, and their object was to defend their author's position in the face of hostility. They are written in the style of the *Laws*, but for an interpretation of their rambling structure and their apparent inconsistencies a knowledge of the circumstances in which they were written is required. To appreciate fully a newspaper article even of a century ago it is necessary to be minutely informed about events and personalities.

Just as Isocrates in the *Antidosis* put his defence of his life and activity into the form of a legal plea, so Plato used the epistolary form. His letters are then in somewhat the same category as the letters of Isocrates to Archidamus, to Dionysius, or to Philip. Whether the addressee read them or not, they set forth to the public the views of the writer. In another aspect, however, the letters of St. Paul, which were originally not intended primarily for the general public, are the best parallel to Plato's. In both we find the confident tone of the seer, the fervid outpouring of an enthusiast who has seen a vision—a vision that compels him to devote his life to propagating a divine truth amongst all man-

kind. Plato in the dialogues is sparring; his method is admirable, but he overcomes his adversary in the trial of skill almost without heat and without effort. In the letters we find that he has at last entered the arena of public life to put his ideals into effect. The written word is not now important for its own sake; it has become a weapon of attack and defence. Plato is fighting not indeed for his life, but for something dearer to him than life, his philosophy. We find no longer the mocking impersonal reticence that masks the real aim of the writer of the dialogues. The whole man appears in the letters; he has given his very soul a hostage to fate. He cannot speak of philosophy, of Dionysius' rejection of it, of Dion's failure and death, without betraying in every phrase and intonation the exaltation of hope or the spiritual fervour that makes him mighty in defeat. When he thinks of the murderers of Dion his tone changes, he becomes the prophet of righteousness invoking the wrath of God upon the wicked. Again his words are like a dirge, full of infinite lamentation, as he pays the last tribute to Dion, the beloved disciple. There is egoism in the letters, but it is the egoism of a Rousseau reforming Corsica as an example to mankind, the egoism of a Paul defending his life and his cause in his letter to the Galatians. The greatness of the cause invests its prophet with an authority that compels respect even for his foibles.

It is clear that nothing so intensely personal as Plato's defence could come from anyone but Plato himself. We now arrive at a criterion of genuineness to be applied

to other letters. Plato has several tones; the rhythm of his utterance varies with his moods. An analysis of the rhythms in the *Letters* and in the *Laws* shows how individual Plato's later style was. A forger must sometimes betray himself by working mechanically. He could not preserve everywhere the illusion of personality. In particular a forger could no more reproduce the prophetic tones in which Plato speaks of philosophy and of the cause of justice than a modern could imitate the organ tones of Milton or the crisp alertness of Voltaire. It is the presence of such characteristic utterance that has led me to treat the second, fourth, sixth, tenth, and eleventh epistles as genuine The ninth is certainly spurious, the fifth doubtful but still probably spurious. The thirteenth epistle stands by itself in relation to the concluding paragraphs of the second. It seems genuine at least in part and there is nothing decisive against any of it. Let it pass as genuine with a warning to the reader.

2. Historical Exposition.

Since the letters themselves, Plutarch's *Life of Dion* and his *Life of Timoleon*, and Grote's account in his *History of Greece*, give an adequate and interesting account of Plato's relations with Sicilian affairs, I shall content myself with a brief sketch of the circumstances with which the letters deal. The seventh letter affords us an insight into Plato's development and character. His chief interest in youth had been political action, and

through all his later career the hope of benefiting mankind through political reform was the leading motive of his activity. The disillusionment that followed his early attempts to enter public life at Athens led to a conviction that cities could only be ruled well if those who governed them were converts to philosophy. A corollary to this conviction was the belief that no government could be stable unless the citizens either restrained their own appetites or were forced to limit them by a central authority. Philosophy meant to Plato something very different from a point of view; it meant religious devotion to a practical ideal, reinforced by mathematical and scientific studies. Philosophy was a creed, a cult, a religion, that demanded utter loyalty from its adherents and rewarded them with happiness in this world and the next.

It was primarily for the sake of producing adherents of philosophy competent to guide mankind to political reform that Plato founded the Academy soon after he reached forty years of age. For twenty years more he was inculcating his ideals and gradually attaining a preeminent position among the teachers and philosophers of the day. At sixty years of age he deserted the studious calm of Athens for an enterprise that clouded with deepening tragedy the last twenty years of his life. Dionysius the Elder died in the year 367. He left the greatest empire of the day, which included most of Sicily and southern Italy, in the hands of his son Dionysius, who was inexperienced, weak, pleasure-loving, incompetent, vain, suspicious, and well-meaning.

Meanwhile the actual government was in the hands of Dion, brother-in-law of Dionysius and forty years of age. He was an experienced and competent administrator and quickly took up the reins of government in a decisive way that made him practical ruler and gave Dionysius ground for alarm. Reforms were introduced which aroused opposition on the part of those who profited by the monarchy. Dionysius' loyalty to Dion's programme was undermined by courtiers who fostered his love of pleasure. They persuaded him to recall from exile Philistus, the historian, a competent administrator and an adherent of monarchical government. Dion's arbitrary temper prevented him from controlling an influential party. He accordingly proposed to maintain his authority by inviting Plato to come to Syracuse for the purpose of instructing Dionysius in philosophy. Thus Dion through Plato's influence could count on Dionysius' support.

When Plato arrived he was received with acclamation. Dionysius welcomed him with fervour and the courtiers followed suit. No popular hero can, however, live up to the expectations of all his supporters. Dionysius soon gave up mathematical studies for a life of self-indulgence and in the fourth month after Plato's arrival found means to rid himself of the imperious Dion. Plato now found his position uncomfortable. He was no longer popular and the Syracusan court showed him less attention. He determined to leave unless Dionysius were willing to take up his studies seriously and to recall Dion. This Dionysius promised to do. He

put off the day of reform, however, by asking Plato to wait until he had made peace with the Carthaginians. Plato meanwhile returned home.

His relations with Dionysius were friendly, but he was deeply hurt by the latter's refusal to take up philosophy seriously. Still he had some hope of success at a later time, and showed his interest in Dionysius' progress by sending mathematical and other teachers to his court. In the thirteenth epistle we have his letter introducing Helicon. Plato also arranged for a meeting between Archytas of Tarentum and Dionysius. This resulted in a treaty of friendship between the two states and in Dionysius' undertaking a war against the Lucanians, who threatened the Greek cities in southern Italy. The Syracusan court now became a favourite resort of Greek philosophers, and Dionysius determined to add Plato to his circle. He had of course no intention of recalling Dion, who might easily have proved dangerous. By playing, however, upon Plato's desire to effect a great reform and upon the various private interests of Dion and other friends of Plato, he induced the philosopher to come once more to Syracuse in the spring of 361.

The acclamation that had greeted him on his first arrival was again repeated, but he had no illusions this time. He soon discovered that Dionysius, while willing to play with philosophy, had no stomach for serious study and would not recall Dion. The rich young ruler resented Plato's loyalty to Dion and was interested in principles only as they affected him personally. He was quite incapable of appreciating devotion to abstract

ideals. This situation resulted in continual irritation leading to greater and greater estrangement. Dionysius behaved very like a vain, spoilt woman. Dion's property was confiscated and his wife and son were taken from him. Plato now even feared for his own life. He was finally saved by the intervention of his friends in Tarentum.

He arrived in Greece and met Dion at the Olympic festival of 360. Dion now made preparations for an expedition against Dionysius. In 357 he set out and, aided by the exultant populace, gained possession of Syracuse, with the exception of its island castle, before Dionysius could move against him. Again his arbitrary attempt to impose reforms on the Syracusans lost him the popular approval. Heracleides, who had also been exiled, became the popular leader, and it was only through mercenaries that Dion could maintain his influence. He retired once to Leontini, but was recalled to save Syracuse from the troops of Dionysius, who had sallied from the castle. When the castle was at last surrendered Dion found himself more and more isolated in his attempt to carry out Plato's plans for political reform. He was induced to execute the popular leader, Heracleides, an act that was practically the first step towards tyranny. As a result he was utterly discredited and became weary of his struggles. One of his own inner circle, Callippus, seized the opportunity and by assassinating Dion won for himself a temporary sovereignty in Syracuse (B. C. 353–352). Dion's followers took refuge in Leontini. Since Dion's son died before his father, they were at a loss for a leader.

It was in these circumstances that Plato addressed to them the seventh epistle. Dion's nephew, Hipparinus, who was also a half-brother of Dionysius the Younger, hereupon took the lead and starting from Leontini captured Syracuse, which he ruled for two years. One of Dion's friends, Hicetas, ruled in Leontini. A son of Dion, born posthumously to his wife, Arete, in a Syracusan prison, where she was imprisoned by Callippus, was now brought to Leontini with his mother and attracted the loyalty of Dion's followers. Sicily was the scene of continual strife. Deliverers succeeded one another rapidly, each becoming as much a tyrant as the man he had expelled. The Carthaginians were encroaching from the west, the Italians from the north. The armies consisted largely of mercenaries—Campanians, Iberians, Ligurians, Celts, and others; and the Greek population seemed likely to become permanently subject or to be wiped out altogether. This was the state of things when Plato wrote the eighth epistle.

In 350 Hipparinus died and was succeeded at Syracuse by his brother Nysaeus, who did not long survive. Meanwhile Dionysius had been ruling at Locri in Italy. Hicetas at Leontini finally broke entirely with Dion's party and marked his decision to follow the path of tyranny by cruelly exterminating the family of Dion. When Plato died in 347, the aspect of Sicilian affairs was dark indeed. We know from the sixth letter that he still believed in the power of philosophy to make men happy, though he insists on the importance of practical intuition and experience. It is

only rarely in the course of history that a philosopher has ever been entrusted with political power. In Plato's case the results were too tragic to be forgotten. From Aristotle to Voltaire his successors have instructed and amused the rulers of this world, but no philosopher has since, like Plato, held the world at gaze, demanding the homage of mankind for the rule of philosophy.

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CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

B. C.

427. Birth of Plato.

408. Birth of Dion.

405. Dionysius becomes tryant of Syracuse.

404. Tyranny of the Thirty.

399. Death of Socrates.

388. Plato's return from his first visit to Syracuse, succeeded by his foundation of the Academy.

367. Death of Dionysius the Elder and Plato's second visit to Syracuse. Expulsion of Dion.

366. Plato's return. Date of the thirteenth epistle.

363. Date of the second epistle.

361. Plato's third visit to Syracuse.

360. Plato returns. Date of the eleventh epistle.

357. Dion's expedition. Capture of Syracuse.

356–353. Disputes between Dion and Heracleides. Surrender of the citadel to Dion. Execution of Heracleides. Date of the tenth, the fourth, and the third epistles.

353. Callippus assassinates Dion. Date of the seventh epistle (begun in 356?).

352. Hipparinus expels Callippus from Syracuse. Date of the eighth epistle.

350. Death of Hipparinus. Date of the sixth epistle?

347. Death of Plato.

TABLES OF DESCENT

1. Hipparinus I (*d. ca.* 400) had
   - sons
     - Dion (408–353), m. Arete.
     - Megacles.
     - Eurymenes.
   - daughters
     - Aristomache, m. Dionysius I.
     - —, m. Leptines.
     - —, m. Thearidas.

2. Hermocrates
   - Dionysius I (431–367), m. —— (*d.* 405), Doris, Aristomache.
   - Leptines, m. (a sister of Dion).
   - Thearidas (*d.* 372 ?), m. (a sister of Dion), Arete.

3. Dionysius I (431–367) had by
   - Doris
     - Dionysius II (392 ?–335 ?).
     - Hermocritus.
     - Dikaiosyne.
   - Aristomache
     - Hipparinus II (376 ?–350).
     - Nysaeus (374 ?–346 ?).
     - Arete (390 ?–348 ?).
     - Sophrosyne (388 ?–344).

4. Dion had by Arete two sons
   - Hipparinus Aretaeus (370 ?–354),
   - (posthumous son, 353–348 ?).

5. Dionysius II, m. Sophrosyne, had a son Apollocrates and other children.

EPISTLES

Introduction to Epistle XIII

THE question whether the thirteenth epistle is genuine has been a matter of bitter controversy for generations, and no signs of general agreement are as yet apparent. The grounds for suspicion are well set forth by Ritter (*Neue Untersuchungen über Platon*, pp. 327–424). Some of them are satisfactorily answered by Hackforth (*The Authorship of the Platonic Epistles*). There are after all no insuperable objections to a belief in the genuineness of the letter. There are many expressions in the letter which are characteristically Platonic. The style of a chatty personal letter written rapidly and not intended for publication would certainly differ from that of Plato's formal letters and treatises.

In the absence of objective criteria the decision in regard to this letter must be based on the answer to this question: Is Plato's attitude as given in the letter consistent with what we know of him and of his relation to Dionysius at this time? It is interesting to note that students of history have usually answered this question in the affirmative, while the philosophers with one or two notable exceptions refuse to believe that the great Plato might, like Cicero, appear in his letters very human indeed.

Plato had at the invitation of Dion and Dionysius arrived in Syracuse in the autumn of 367. Dion was at this time almost supreme in the government. He was in command of a powerful navy which kept at bay the Carthaginians with whom Dionysius was at

war (Plutarch, *Life of Dion*, vi, vii). Meanwhile Plato was endeavouring to convert Dionysius to the practice of philosophy as a preliminary step to the carrying into effect of his political ideals. Dionysius, however, while willing to order any particular measures suggested by Plato, hesitated to put himself completely into his hands, for fear that he might find that he had taken an irretrievable step and that he was doomed to remain a cipher in the government while Dion exercised practical control (Ep. VII, 330 b).

Dionysius finally by the use of surprise and force expelled Dion before his friends could act in his favour. This occurred within four months of Plato's arrival. Dion once out of the way, Dionysius became more confident and grew to like Plato, who induced him to mitigate the harshness of Dion's exile by letting him have the income of his property. In a short time it was rumoured that Dionysius was completely under Plato's influence. In spite, however, of his influence with Dionysius, Plato had no desire to remain in Syracuse, for the tyrant was unwilling to forgo his pleasures to lead the life required of Plato's disciples. Hence it was mutually agreed that Plato was to depart for a time, and to come back with Dion after Dionysius had succeeded in arranging a peace with the Carthaginians. Dionysius and Plato were genuinely attached to each other, whenever Dion could be left out of consideration. It was Plato's loyalty to Dion and Dionysius' resultant jealousy that turned what might have been love to enmity. Plato then arrived at Athens in the summer of 366, between the gathering of figs and that of myrtle berries (361 b).

The thirteenth letter, if genuine, was written in the autumn of 366. Plato in this letter treats Dionysius as a well-meaning but simple-minded youth who

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requires admonition and instruction on every point. Plato seems to identify his own interests with those of Dionysius and to seek to give the impression that he is on the look out at Athens on behalf of Dionysius.

This picture of the untrained youth at the head of a great empire advised like a child by the somewhat condescending philosopher fits into our knowledge of the relations between Dionysius and Plato only at the moment when it purports to have been written. There was no question of a disagreement between the two until Plato refused to return to Syracuse without Dion.

Dionysius at a later time took up seriously the study of popular philosophies and forced Plato to acknowledge his natural ability (Ep. II, 314 d; Ep. VII, 338 d).

Plato thereupon began to treat him with more respect and again entertained hopes of his conversion to a philosophic life—as we see from the second epistle, written about three years later than the present one.

We may urge then in favour of the acceptance of the thirteenth epistle the fact that it presents us with a picture that could not be obtained from the other epistles, while it agrees with what we can infer from the statements of Plato and of Plutarch. We may also urge the fine seriousness about small matters which is seen in the writer of the letter and is also characteristic of Plato. The thirteenth letter may well be Plato's and it can hardly have been written by an ordinary forger.

There remains a possibility that is perhaps worth suggesting. The letter was in Dionysius' possession and may have been published by him to illustrate his statement that at one time he had been entirely under the influence of Plato. In that case he would not have scrupled, and might have found it amusing, to add details that would alienate Plato's friends and scandalize

the whole philosophic circle. It speaks, however, rather for the genuineness of the letter than for this view of it as partly a malicious forgery that Plato does not refer to it in any way in the seventh epistle.

Epistle XIII

360 Plato to Dionysius, Tyrant of Syracuse, Prosperity.

Be this my introduction and at the same time a token for you that the letter is from me.[1] Once when you were entertaining the young men of Locri, you occupied a couch a good way from mine. You then rose and came to me with words of greeting that were excellent.
b I thought so at least and my neighbour at table too, who thereupon—he was one of the cultured circle—put the question: 'I suppose, Dionysius, Plato is a great help to you in your studies?' You replied: 'In much else too, for from the moment that I sent for him, the very fact that I had so sent was at once helpful to me.' Here then is something that we must keep alive. We must see to it that we continue to be more and more helpful to each other. So I am doing my part now to effect this by sending you herewith some Pythagorean treatises and some classifications.[2] I am also sending you a man, as we agreed at the time, who will perhaps be useful to you and Archytas—that is, if Archytas
c has come to Syracuse.[3] His name is Helicon; he is a native of Cyzicus, a pupil of Eudoxus and well versed in all his teaching. He has also studied under a pupil of Isocrates and under Polyxenus, an associate of

Bryson. With all this he has the quality rarely combined with this of possessing social grace and he seems not to be ill-natured. In fact he would impress one rather as being full of fun and good-natured. I say this, however, with misgivings; because I am expres- d
sing an opinion about a man, and man, while no mean animal, is a changeable one, with a very few exceptions in a few matters.[4] For even in his case my caution and mistrust led me to make investigations, meeting him personally and inquiring of his fellow-citizens, and no one said anything against the man. But be cautious and test him yourself. By all means, however, if you have the least bit of time for it, take lessons of him, in addition to the rest of your philosophic training. If e
that is impossible, have someone else thoroughly instructed, so that, when you have time to study, you may do so and not only benefit yourself but add to your reputation; and so I shall go on being constantly helpful to you.[5] So much for these matters.

As for the things you wrote to me to send you, I 361
have had the Apollo[6] done and Leptines is bringing it. It is the work of an excellent young craftsman named Leochares. He had in his workshop another work that I thought very fine, so I bought it as a present for your wife[7] because her care of me in health and in illness was honourable both to you and to me. Give it to her, then, unless you decide otherwise. I am also sending twelve jars of sweet wine for the children and two of honey. We arrived too late to store up figs, b
and the myrtle-berries that were put in store spoiled.

Another time we will take better care. Leptines[8] will tell you about plants.

The money for these purposes—that is, to buy these articles and to pay some taxes due to the city—I took from Leptines, giving him an explanation that I thought as creditable to us as any and one that I could give without falsehood, namely that it was my money that I spent on the Leucadian ship, amounting to about sixteen minas.[9] This sum then I took and used for my
c own purposes and for these things that I have dispatched to you.

In the next place I want you to know what your financial position is with respect to your credit at Athens and with respect to my claims. I will use your money, as I told you once, just as I do that of my other friends. I use just as little as I can, only the amount that I consider necessary or fair or creditable to me and to the man whose money I am taking.

Well, my present circumstances are as follows. There are four daughters living of those nieces of
d mine,[10] on the occasion of whose death I refused to wear a wreath, though you urged me to. One of them is now of an age to marry, one eight years old, one a little more than three years, and one not yet a year old. Dowries must be provided by me and my friends for any of these that I may live to see married. Those I don't live to see married may look to themselves; and those whose fathers get to be richer than I, I need not provide for. At present I am in easier circumstances than any of them, and it

was I who provided their mothers with dowries, aided among others by Dion. Now the eldest of these is going c to marry Speusippus, since she is his sister's daughter. I need no more than thirty minas for her, for that is a fair dowry here. Furthermore, if my mother dies, I shall need no more than ten minas for the construction of her tomb. In these matters my requirements for the present are about what I have mentioned. If, however, any other expense arises, either private or public, because of my visit to you, we must do as I told you at the time—I must struggle to make the expense as little as possible, and what I can't avoid you must pay.

Next I have to say in regard to the expenditure of 362 sums from your account at Athens, first, that if I have to spend money on equipping a chorus or anything of the sort, you have not, as we supposed, anyone connected with you here who will advance it, and secondly, that, when, as may happen, important interests of your own are at stake, so that a prompt expenditure will be advantageous, while any postponement of expenditure until someone can come from you with the money will be detrimental, such a situation is not only inconvenient; it is ignominious. Really this is a matter that I have proved myself. I sent Erastus to Andromedes the Aeginetan, on whom, as a connexion b of yours, you told me to draw for whatever I needed; for I wanted to send you some other rather important things that you wrote for. He, however, answered, as was reasonable and natural, that when he had on a former occasion paid out money on your father's account

he had had difficulty in getting it back and that this time he would pay a small sum but no more.[11] Under these conditions I took the money from Leptines. Leptines moreover deserves some praise for his conduct, not because he paid the money but because he did it cheerfully. In other cases, too, where he said or did anything that concerned you, he showed clearly that he
c was a friend and what kind of friend he was. Surely I ought to report such conduct as this or the reverse, giving you in each case my opinion of anyone's behaviour in regard to you.

At any rate I am going to be frank with you about financial matters, since it is my duty and since, moreover, I can speak with some experience of your surroundings. Those who on any occasion bring you information are unwilling to inform you of anything that they suppose
d involves expense, for fear of incurring ill will. Do then accustom them and compel them to tell you of such matters, as well as of everything else. You must yourself be acquainted with every detail as far as you can and be your own judge and not avoid such acquaintance with details, since nothing could be more advantageous for you in your government. Expending money rightly and making payments rightly, as you yourself say and will say, is a good thing both for other reasons and for the sake of your financial position itself. So don't let those who say they are watching your interests cause a prejudice to arise against you. It is a good thing
e neither for yourself nor for your reputation to be thought unsatisfactory in your financial dealings.

Next I will speak of Dion. About other matters I can't tell you yet, not until the letters come from you, as you promised. In regard, however, to the matter you forbade me to mention to him, though I neither mentioned nor discussed it, I did try to discover whether or not he would be greatly concerned if it happened, and my opinion is that he would be not a little moved if it were to occur.[12] In all other respects I think Dion not only claims to be but is reasonable in his attitude towards you.

To Cratinus, who is a brother of Timotheus, but a 363
companion of mine,[13] let us give a breastplate for military service, one of the padded ones for the infantry; and to the daughters of Cebes three eleven-foot robes, not the expensive ones from Amorgus but linen ones from Sicily. You probably know Cebes by name, for he is represented in the Socratic dialogues in company with Simmias holding a conversation with Socrates in the dialogue on the soul.[14] He is intimate and in sympathy with all of us.

Now about the token that distinguishes between the b
letters that are seriously intended and those that are not, I suppose you remember my instruction, but nevertheless take notice and give me your close attention. There are many who ask me to write whom it is not easy to put off openly, so at the beginning of the letters that are seriously intended, I put *God*; in other cases, *the gods*.[15]

The envoys requested me to write to you and with reason, for they very heartily everywhere sing your

praises and mine, Philagrus especially, who at that time had something the matter with his hand. Philaedes, too, when he arrived from the court of the great king,
c spoke of you. Except that it would have required a very long letter I should have written what he said. Under the circumstances you must inquire of Leptines.

In case you send the breastplate, or anything else that I write for, if you have any preference for any other messenger, well and good; otherwise give it to Terillus. He is one of those that make the voyage regularly, and is not only a friend of ours in other ways, but is versed in philosophy as well. He is related by marriage to Tison, who was city commissioner when I sailed.

Farewell and lead the philosophic life and encourage
d the younger men. Give my greetings to the group who join you at ball-play,[16] and give orders to Aristocritus and the others, in case any work or letter of mine comes to you, to see to it that you know of it without delay and to keep reminding you to attend to the injunctions I give you in my letters. Now in particular don't neglect to reimburse Leptines for his advance. Pay him at once that others may observe your treatment of him and be the more willing to accommodate us.

c Iatrocles, whom I set free at that time along with Myronides, is to sail now with the things that I am sending. Give him then some salaried post (you may count on his loyalty) and, if you choose to make use of him, do so. Preserve this letter, either itself or a memorandum of it, and be always the same.

Introduction to Epistle II

The genuineness of the second epistle has been questioned not so much on the ground of style as because several passages are difficult to interpret. Its style resembles quite closely that of the seventh and eighth epistles. A strong argument for the genuineness of the letter is the fact that it throws a great deal of light on a particular stage in the relations of Plato and Dionysius that is not illuminated by the other letters.

It is a private letter written to Dionysius probably early in 363. Plutarch explains the circumstances in which it was written (*Dion* xvi. 3). When Plato had arrived at Syracuse in 367 he was at first warmly welcomed by Dionysius, who was very soon almost completely under his influence. Advised, however, by Philistus and others, he came to suspect Dion of plotting to seize the government, and Plato of complicity in the plot.

He accordingly banished Dion and became mistrustful of Plato, who attempted to intervene in favour of Dion. In fact Plato in all his relations with Dionysius after this time made it a cardinal point to secure the return of Dion. Dionysius now ceased to care for Plato's instruction and made the war with the Carthaginians a pretext for dismissing him. He promised to send for him and Dion within a year. This promise was not kept. In the meantime Dionysius invited to his court such men as Aristippus and Aeschines. He was visited by Archytas of Tarentum, the mathematician and statesman, and pursued with him the study of mathematics under the guidance of Helicon, whom Plato had recommended to him. The war with

Carthage must have been settled early in Dionysius' reign, but it is probable that after entering into friendly relations with Archytas he made war on the Lucanians who were threatening the Greek cities in Italy.

Meanwhile Plato's relations with Dionysius continued to be friendly but formal. Plato now sent Polyxenus to Syracuse with a letter of recommendation. He arrived there soon after the Olympic festival of 364. Dionysius now conceived a desire to see Plato once more. He had discussed Plato's views with the other teachers at his court. They were eager to discover the details of Plato's doctrine, and though Dionysius disclosed more than Plato wished, yet he found himself ill supplied with information and came to regret his lost opportunity for full instruction.

It was good policy for Dionysius to cultivate the friendship of Plato, for Plato might restrain Dion, if he were planning an expedition against his brother-in-law. There seems, however, to have been more than policy in Dionysius' attitude to Plato. His jealousy of Dion's place in Plato's affection shows a real attraction on his part to the philosopher. Hence it is not surprising that in a letter written soon after Polyxenus' arrival in Syracuse, Dionysius made the war his excuse for not keeping his promise to invite Plato and Dion to return to Syracuse within a year, and at the same time made some overtures of friendship. We have in Plato's second epistle his reply to this letter, which was brought by 'Archedemus, a Syracusan and a former pupil of Plato.

The reply touches on Dionysius' request that Plato should prevent his companions from speaking or acting against Dionysius. Plato warmly resents the imputation that he has permitted his followers to show hostility to Dionysius and accepts with reservations Dionysius' overtures of friendship. He emphasizes at length the

importance of redeeming the mistakes they have made, citing numerous examples of rulers pilloried for all time in plays and dialogues for their disregard of the advice of wise men. It soon appears that Dionysius' great mistake was in failing to trust Plato, and in appearing to slight his instruction. He points out that the cause of philosophy is injured when its chief representative does not meet with due respect from Dionysius. He then gives Dionysius some explanations about the philosophic vision of the ideal world. He points out to Dionysius that the way to win his friendship is to persevere in his philosophic training and to make his attachment to philosophy the basis of an attachment to the philosopher. The letter ends with a number of comments and requests about matters of common interest.

Epistle II

Plato to Dionysius, Prosperity.[1] 310b

[*How can I help what my followers do? No one obeys my counsel. Still, you have been misinformed.*]

I have heard from Archedemus[2] that you not only expect me to say nothing about you myself, but you want my friends also to refrain from saying or doing anything offensive to you. Of Dion only you make an exception. Now when you make an exception of Dion, the infer- c
ence is that I do not exercise authority over my friends. If I did thus exercise authority over you and Dion as well as the others, it would have been better for all of us, and for the rest of the Greeks too, I maintain. The fact is, however, that my power is no more than this: I can count on the obedience of one follower, namely myself. I do not mean by this that there is any

truth in what Cratistolus and Polyxenus told you, for
d one of them, it is said, reports that at Olympia[3] he heard a number of my companions abusing you. Of course his hearing may be keener than mine. I certainly heard nothing of the sort. In my opinion you would do well in future, when anyone makes such a report about any of us, to write and ask me about it, for I shall be neither afraid nor ashamed to tell the truth.

[*It is important how you and I behave towards each other, for rulers and wise men who come into contact with each other remain for all time a subject of discussion.*]

As for you and me and our mutual relations, the situation is as follows. There is no Greek, you may say, who has not heard of us as individuals; moreover our association with one another is generally discussed;
e and, be not deceived, it will continue to be discussed in time to come; for the number of those who have heard of our intercourse corresponds to its closeness and warmth. Well, what do I mean by this? I will go back a little and explain. It is a natural law that wisdom and great power attract each other. They are always pursuing and seeking after each other and coming together. Furthermore, this is a subject that people always find interesting whether they are themselves discussing it in a private gathering, or are listening to the
311 treatment of it by others in poems. For example, when people are talking of Hiero[4] or the Spartan Pausanias, they like to introduce their association with Simonides and recount his conduct and remarks to them. Again,

they are wont to celebrate together Periander of Corinth and Thales of Miletus, or Pericles and Anaxagoras, or again, Croesus and Solon as wise men and Cyrus as ruler. Moreover, the poets copy these examples and bring b together Creon and Tiresias,[5] Polyidus and Minos, Agamemnon and Nestor, and Odysseus and Palamedes. With much the same idea, I believe, primitive men brought together Prometheus and Zeus. The poets also show how in some such cases the two characters became enemies; in others, friends; how in some cases they were first friends and then enemies, and how in others they agreed in some things but differed on other points.

[*It is a mark of greatness to be concerned about the verdict of posterity.*]

Now my object in saying all this is to point the moral that in our case too, discussion of our acts will not forthwith cease with our death. Here then is a matter c that demands consideration; for we ought, it appears, to consider as well the time to come, since it is a fact that the most slavish men by a sort of natural law give it no thought, while the best men leave nothing undone to acquire a good reputation with posterity. To me this is a proof that the dead have some perception of events here, for the noblest souls know this truth by intuition, d while the vilest souls deny it; but the intuitions of the godlike are more valid than those of other men.

[*We, unlike the others, can still secure a good name by behaving better in future.*]

In my opinion, if those earlier rulers and philosophers whom I have mentioned had it in their power to amend

what was amiss in their intercourse with each other, they would do their utmost to have better things said of them than is now the case. For us, though, it is still possible, please God, where we made any mistakes in our former intercourse, to correct them by our actions or by our words. The true philosophy,[6] I maintain, will be better thought of and better spoken of if we conduct ourselves well; but if otherwise, the reverse. Indeed if we were to make this object our concern, we could be engaged in no more pious act, nor in any more impious, if we were to neglect it.

[*My recent visit to your court was thoroughly disappointing, for my only object in going was to secure for philosophy the respect of the multitude.*]

Now I will explain how we must set about attaining this object and will show what principles are involved. I went to Sicily with the reputation of being by far the most distinguished among those devoted to philosophy,
312 but my object in going to Syracuse was to gain your support, that so I might see philosophy held in esteem even among the common throng. The result was not propitious. The reason that I assign for this is not the one that many would give,[7] but that you appeared to have no great faith in me. You wanted to get rid of me in some way and to send for others. You wanted, I believe, in your mistrust, to discover the secret of my activities. At this there were many to take up the cry that you had a poor opinion of me and were devoted to
b other matters, and this is the report that is in general circulation.

[*The thing to do now is for you to make up your mind whether you will be my disciple and will treat me with due respect.*]

I proceed now to point out the right course for us to take hereafter. This will also answer your question what our relation to each other is to be. If you have no respect at all for philosophic pursuits, let them alone. If you have some respect, but have been taught by someone else or have discovered for yourself a better philosophy than mine, show your esteem for that. If, however, you prefer my philosophic teaching, you ought to make me too an object of special esteem.

[*It would be disgraceful for me to pay court to you.*]

Now, as in the beginning, you must show the way and I will follow your leading. If you show me marks of esteem, I will repay them; if I receive no such marks, I shall keep my own counsel. Note too that c any marks of respect you show me, if you take the lead, will be evidence that you think highly of philosophy; and the very fact that you have examined other teachers [8] of philosophy besides me will cause many to honour you as a true philosopher. On the other hand any marks of respect that I show you, unless you return them, will be interpreted as evidence of my admiration of and desire for wealth—and such a name, we know, is nowhere an honest one. To put it in a nutshell, if you do homage to me, we both rise in men's esteem; if I do homage d to you, we both sink. So much for this subject.

[*You need explanations of certain matters. It is most important to distinguish the essential reality from accidental qualities.*]

The sphere[9] is not right. Archedemus will make it clear to you when he comes. He must also by all means give you an explanation of the matter about which you were in difficulty when you dispatched him, a subject indeed higher and more godlike than the other. According to his report you say that you are not satisfied with the demonstration of the nature of the first principle. I must state it to you in riddles,[10] so that in case something happens to the tablet 'by land or sea in
e secret nook', he who reads may not understand. It is like this. It is in relation to the king[11] of all and on his account that everything exists; and that fact is the cause of all that is beautiful. In relation to a second, the second class of things exists; and in relation to a third, the third class. Now the mind of man, when it has to do with them, endeavours to gain a knowledge of their qualities, fixing its attention on the things with which it has itself some affinity; these, however, are in
313 no case adequate. In regard to the king and the things I mentioned there is nothing like this.* Thereupon the soul says: 'But what are they like?' This question, thou son of Dionysius and Doris—or rather the travail that this question occasions in the soul—is the cause of all the trouble; and if that be not expelled from a man, he shall never genuinely find the truth.

* Or, 'the king and the things I mentioned have no such qualities.'

[*Like others you have found in this a fundamental difficulty.*]

You told me in the garden under the laurels that you had thought of this yourself and that it was an original discovery of yours. I replied that if you really were b clear about it, that fact would relieve me of a great deal of explanation. I said, however, that I had never met anyone else who had made this discovery; that in fact that very point gave me most of my trouble. Probably you had heard it explained by someone, though possibly you might by divine ordering have been impelled of yourself in that direction, and thought that you had a secure hold on the demonstration, and therefore did not fix securely the truth of which you had a glimpse. Instead of remaining fixed it darts to and fro, taking now one form, now another, never getting away from the appearances of things. The truth, though, has no such variability. You are not the only one who has been in c such a case. I assure you that no one, the first time he heard me, was ever in any other state in the beginning. One has more difficulty, another less, before he finally gets clear. Hardly anyone has but little difficulty.

[*Your present doubts will, however, result this time in a certainty all the greater because you have exercised caution.*]

Since things have taken and are taking such a course, we have, I think, very nearly found an answer to your question, what our relation to each other is to be. Since you are putting my principles to the proof by

going to other teachers and by considering my views in
d comparison with theirs, as well as by themselves, this time, if your examination is genuine, these principles will grow to be a part of you, and you will be their friend as well as mine.

[*The way to remove your doubts is to keep on sending Archedemus to me for explanations.*]

Now how are these things, together with all that I have mentioned, to come to pass? On the present occasion you did right to send Archedemus; and in future, after he has returned and has reported my message, you will perhaps again be overtaken by other difficulties. You will accordingly send Archedemus to me again, if you are well advised, and he will come back to you with
e fresh wares. If you do this two or three times and test adequately what I send, I shall be surprised if the points about which you are now in difficulty do not assume a very different aspect. Take this course then with all confidence, for never will you order nor Archedemus carry finer wares or any more acceptable to the gods than these.

[*A caution is needed. Please keep these doctrines secret. Put nothing in writing.*]

314 Take precautions, however, lest this teaching ever be disclosed among untrained people, for in my opinion there is in general no doctrine more ridiculous in the eyes of the general public than this, nor on the other hand any more wonderful and inspiring to those naturally gifted. Often repeated and constantly attended to for many years,[12] it is at last like gold with great effort

freed from all alloy. Let me tell you, however, the surprising thing about it. There are men, and a good many of them too, who have intelligence and memory b and the ability to judge a doctrine after examining it by every possible test, who are now old men and have been receiving instruction not less than thirty [13] years, who have just reached the point of saying that what formerly they thought most uncertain, now appears to them quite certain and evident; while what seemed most certain then, appears now uncertain. Consider these facts and take care lest you some time come to repent of having now unwisely disclosed the doctrine. It is a very great safeguard to learn by heart instead of writing. It is impossible for what is written not to be disclosed. c That is the reason why I have never written anything about these things, and why there is not and will not be any written work of Plato's own.[14] What are now called his are the work of a Socrates grown beautiful and young. Farewell and believe. Read this letter now at once many times and burn it. So much for these matters.

[*Of course I am aware that you are more than a match for some of the teachers who have flocked to your court.*]

You were surprised that I should send Polyxenus to you. For my part I have long been saying and say now d the same thing about Lycophron and the others who are with you, that you altogether surpass them in talent for discussion and in logical method.[15] None of them submits to confutation voluntarily, as some suppose, but

they are forced to do so. It seems to me, moreover, that you have been very fair in your treatment of them and in your gifts. So much for this, and a great deal for such a subject.

[*I close my letter with some requests and a report.*]

If you are making any use of Philistion yourself, by
e all means do so; but if it can be done, dismiss him and let Speusippus have him. Speusippus joins me in the request.[16] Philistion himself promised me that, if you would let him go, he would gladly come to Athens. You did well to release the man from the quarries, but my request about his servants and about Hegesippus, son of Ariston, would not be burdensome to grant. You wrote to me, you know, that if any one wronged either him or the others and you learned of it, you would not
315 suffer it. I must also give you a truthful report in regard to Lysicleides. He is the only one who has come to Athens from Sicily and has not perverted the truth about our association. He always says something that is good about what has taken place and puts the best construction on it.

Introduction to Epistle XI

The eleventh letter may be accepted as genuine. The style and the thought are Platonic and there are minute details of agreement with the circumstances of the time and with Plato's special traits that are, when taken together, decisive for the authentic character of the letter. Laodamas, a native of Thasos, had applied to Plato for assistance in drawing up laws for a colony he was founding. The colony may have been Krenidae (360–359 B. C.) or Datos (360 B. C.). At this moment, however, Plato had just returned (August, 360) from his second visit to Syracuse. His hope of reforming mankind by law had incurred a severe set-back. He was weary of travel and had refused even to join Dion in his preparations against Dionysius. (See Ep. VII, 350 d.) At this period, moreover, Alexander of Pherae blocked the land route to Thrace, while his piratical activity, which was largely directed against Athens, made the sea extremely unsafe. To the first invitation of Laodamas Plato had replied requesting him to come to Athens. In his second letter Laodamas evidently made a more pressing request that Plato come in person or send the younger Socrates to help draw up a constitution, or, it may be, to induce the colonists to accept a constitution of the right sort. This time Plato sends a final refusal that betrays his disillusionment and his weariness.

Epistle XI

Plato to Laodamas, Prosperity.

358 d

I wrote to you before that it is of great importance for all the interests that you mention that you should your-

self come to Athens. Since, however, you say that that is impossible, it would be next best if Socrates or I, as you suggested, were able to come to you. It happens
e though that Socrates is suffering from strangury, while as for me, if I were to come, it would not look well for me not to succeed in carrying out the projects which you invite me to undertake. I have, however, no great hope of such success, for reasons which could only be explained in another long letter, relating the whole story.[1] Furthermore, I am not physically equal on account of my age to the difficulties of travel and to the sort of dangers that are encountered by land and sea. Just now, too, the routes are altogether beset with risks.[2] Still I can give you and your colonists advice which,
359 when I give it, will, to quote Hesiod, be 'simple in appearance, but hard to understand'.[3] If any think[4] it possible, by the ordaining of any laws whatsoever,[5] for any government to be well organized without the existence in the city of some authority concerned with daily life to see that both slave and free live soberly and manfully, their belief is false. Such an authority, however, might be established, if there are in existence men worthy of such a position. If, though, someone is needed to
b educate such rulers, in my opinion there exist neither anyone to give, nor any to receive such an education. Rather you must do the only thing left, and pray to the gods.[6] In fact former cities were generally organized in this way at first and only later obtained good institutions through stress of great crises that occurred either in war or in connexion with other achievements, when

at such moments there appeared some man well-born and well-bred who exercised great authority.[7] Until then you must and should take a great interest in the c question, but must nevertheless accept my statement of the case and not be so foolish as to suppose that you can achieve[8] anything off-hand. Good fortune be yours.

Introduction to Epistle X

The tenth letter has characteristic touches of Platonic style and thought. Written to an unknown follower of Dion at a time when the loyalty of his companions was shaken by his growing unpopularity among the Syracusans, it illustrates Plato's interest in Dion and in the subsequent career of those pupils of his who followed Dion. Plato here sums up the doctrine that forms the key-note of his teaching. Philosophy is not merely of the head, but also of the heart. For an earlier account of this element of 'doggedness' in the true philosopher, see *Rep.*, Book II, 375, 376.

Epistle X

358 c Plato to Aristodorus, Prosperity.

I hear from Dion that you are now one of his closest companions and that you have been so throughout, exhibiting the wisest character among the adherents of philosophy. Steadfastness and loyalty and sincerity, that, say I, is the genuine philosophy. Other kinds of wisdom and cleverness, that lead to other results, I believe I name correctly when I term them mere embellishments. Farewell and hold fast to the traits to which you already hold fast.

Introduction to Epistle IV

The date and circumstances of the fourth letter are approximately the same as those of the third. It is addressed to Dion, but is more than a personal letter. It was intended to serve as an exhortation to all of Dion's followers with the object of strengthening Dion by assuring him of Plato's whole-hearted support and approbation. On this view the last paragraph of the letter is to be taken as a personal message to Dion not meant for publication.

Epistle IV

Plato to Dion of Syracuse, Prosperity. 320

[*I rejoice at the military success of my pupils: but the most important victory is still to come. I mean the triumph of virtue.*]

I suppose it has been plain all along that I am heartily interested in the achievements that have been brought to pass. It must also have been plain that I was very eager to see them brought to final completion, as much as anything because I am ambitious for the success of the noble cause. I think it right that those who are in reality b good men, and who act accordingly, should obtain the renown that they deserve. At the moment certainly the situation, please God, is excellent; the great struggle, however, lies before us; for, though it might seem to belong to certain others as well as to you to

excel in courage or swiftness or strength, surely those who make it their boast to honour truth and justice and generosity, and a behaviour that conforms to these
c ideals, must by general consent be expected to excel in them.

[*Such a triumph is the more desirable since the eyes of mankind are fixed on you.*]

Now my meaning is already plain; yet we should still remind ourselves that certain men (you know who)[1] ought to surpass other men more than they surpass children. We must make it conspicuous that we are the sort of men we claim to be, especially since, please God, it will be easy. The circumstances of others
d are such that they must travel far and wide if they are to be known; whereas your present position is such that men everywhere in the inhabited world, overbold though it be to say so, have their eyes fixed on one locality, and in that locality chiefly on you.

[*You are an actor playing a part before the whole world. Let my applause spur you on.*]

Since then all men are watching you, prepare to play the part of Lycurgus[2] or Cyrus of old, or of anyone else who has ever become famous for superior character and statesmanship, especially since many, in fact practically all who are on the spot, say that it is quite likely that, when Dionysius has been put out of the way, our
e cause will be ruined by the rivalry[3] between you and Heracleides and Theodotes and the others of note. I hope of course above all that no one will behave so; but

if anyone does, you must always appear in the role of healer and it will turn out for the best.

Perhaps you think it ridiculous for me to mention 321
these things because you yourself are quite aware of their importance. I observe, however, that in the theatre the actors are spurred on by the children,[4] to say nothing of their friends, whenever any actor thinks that they are applauding seriously and with goodwill. So now do you all of you play your own part and write to me if you need anything.

[*Do write about your plans. Guard against a too arbitrary attitude towards others.*]

Things here are pretty much as they were when you were with us. Tell me also in your letters what you
have done or what you happen to be engaged in doing, b
since I, for all I hear a great deal, know nothing. Just now letters from Theodotes and Heracleides have arrived in Lacedaemon and Aegina, but as I say, though I hear a great deal, I know nothing about the situation where you are.[5] Reflect also that some think that you are not so obliging as you ought to be. Let it not escape you that popular favour is a means to achievement, while an arbitrary temper has solitude for company. Farewell.

c

Introduction to Epistle III

The third letter, like the seventh and the eighth, was written for publication. It is a political pamphlet in epistolary form. After Plato's return from Syracuse to Greece in 360 he no longer attempted to restrain Dion from using force to effect a revolution at Syracuse. According to his own statement (Ep. VII, 350 d), however, Plato did not actively take part with Dion. The remarkable success of Dion's expedition after his landing in Sicily in the year 357 is narrated in Plutarch's *Life of Dion*. Dionysius nevertheless continued to hold the island citadel of Syracuse either in person or through his representatives for at least another two years. In the meantime it was necessary to organize some sort of a political system to replace the tyranny of Dionysius in the parts of Sicily from which he was excluded. The problem of organizing such a government would have been difficult in any case. For Dion, who preferred failure to a modification of his ideals derived from Plato's instruction, it was impossible. It was in or after the year 356 that Plato exerted his influence to strengthen Dion's position by writing the third letter as well as the fourth and the tenth. He thus for the moment ceased to be neutral and became a participant in the conflict.

The tone of the third letter is controversial. It is probable that Plato was replying to a written statement published by Dionysius. The latter evidently had maintained that his own failure to carry out ten years before the programme now championed by Dion was due to Plato's refusal to permit him to go ahead with it. Here

we see a plea for the support of the popular party which rose against the tyrant under Dion's leadership.

Plato meets the charge by a double plea. In the first place he had not, as was reported, been all-powerful in the government on the occasion of his first visit; nor could he honourably have adhered to Dionysius after the expulsion of Dion. In the second place he had not dissuaded Dionysius from carrying out a programme of reform, but had advocated it. Dionysius had refused to go through the course of training that was necessary before he could effectively carry out Plato's ideals. This argument leads up to the definite statement that Plato favoured the abolition of tyranny and the resettlement of Sicily.

It is plain that Dion's intervention in Sicily was only an interference with the normal course of events. He could not be permanently successful because he never counted amongst his adherents the great mass of Sicilians. He could not be a permanent political factor because he would not (and could not while loyal to his ideals) base his power on the support of one of the two parties to which the citizens naturally gravitated. The issue that brought about a real political cleavage was the conflict between democracy and tyranny, home rule and centralization. Heracleides was the real leader of the democracy and must inevitably be at odds with Dion. Dion had deposed the tyrant, but the democrats were right in suspecting that he had no intention of putting the reins of power into their hands.

Plato in all his letters that are designed for the general public skilfully disguises the fact that there is a real cleavage between the dominant democratic party and Dion. He emphasizes the conflict between tyranny and democracy, a conflict that was practically settled by Dion's military success, and uses all his eloquence to convince the democrats that the details of

their programme have always formed part of the policy of Plato and Dion. In vain, for Dion's firmness in imposing other details of his policy invariably led the multitude to feel that he had delivered them from Dionysius only to impose a harsher tyranny of his own.

Epistle III

315 Plato to Dionysius, Joy.[1]

[*To wish a man joy is no kindness, though you no doubt think otherwise.*]

b Is it the best form of salutation to wish you 'joy' as I have, or would it be better, if I were to follow my usual custom and bid you 'do well'? That is the salutation that I use when I write to my friends. You of course descended to flattery and addressed even the god at Delphi in these very terms—such is the report of those who were in attendance at the time—and wrote, they say: 'Joy to you; keep ever the pleasant life of c a tyrant.'[2] I, though, would not even bid a human being, much less a god, to enjoy himself. Any such injunction to a god would run counter to nature, for the divine dwells afar from the sphere of pleasure and pain. I would avoid such a greeting to a human being, moreover, because in most cases pleasure and pain work harm and produce in the soul dullness and forgetfulness and folly and lawlessness. So much in regard to the salutation. When you read this, take it any way you like.

[*You have slandered me by saying that I prevented your carrying out reforms.*]

It is reported by numerous witnesses that you have informed some of the ambassadors at your court that d I once heard you declare your intention of planting settlers in the Greek cities of Sicily and of lightening the burden of the Syracusans by transforming your government from tyranny to kingship,[3] and that I at that time prevented you from going on with your plans—that is your story—though you were most enthusiastic; while now I am instructing Dion to do just what you suggested. Thus we are using your own ideas to rob you of your realm. Now you know e best yourself whether you derive any benefit from such statements; at any rate, you wrong me when you make a statement that contradicts the facts.

[*It was bad enough to have Philistus spread the report that I was responsible for your acts.*]

I had quite enough of slander in the malicious reports that Philistides[4] and many others circulated about me among the mercenaries and the Syracusan public; for during my residence in the acropolis, those outside threw all the blame on me whenever a mistake was made, by asserting that you took my advice in everything. You know yourself better than anybody that in the beginning, when I thought it would do some good, I did handle jointly with you of my own accord 316 a very few matters of government. In addition to some other minor matters I took a reasonable interest in the preludes to the laws.[5] I except of course any

additions made to them by you or others, for I hear that some of you have since been revising them. Of course our respective contributions will be obvious to those who are capable of distinguishing what is characteristic of me.

[*I must now reply to these two calumnies.*]

Be that as it may, I have no need, as I said just now, of any fresh calumnies aimed at making me unpopular with the Syracusans and any others who believe your
b statements. Rather indeed I need a defence to meet both the earlier calumny and the present one that, coming after the other, is having a greater and more formidable effect. Since there are two charges, my defence must be twofold. I must prove in the first place that I rightly avoided taking any part with you in the administration of the city; and in the second place that I was not the one to give you any such advice or to interfere in any such manner as you say. It is not true that when you were going to plant settlers in
c Greek cities, I blocked your way. Let me then explain first the origin of the charge that I mentioned first.

[*I should never have come to Syracuse except for the fact that Dion was in charge there.*]

I came to Syracuse at your invitation and Dion's. He had long been a tried and true friend of mine and we were united by ties of hospitality; he had reached with middle age the settled period of life. You may be sure that any man who possessed a ray of intelligence would make such conditions an indispensable requirement

before giving advice about affairs as important as yours were at that time. You, on the other hand, were very young; you had never been tested on matters in regard to which a satisfactory test was an absolute necessity, and you were a complete stranger to me. After this, d whether it was the work of man or of god or of chance, with your help Dion was exiled and you were left alone. Do you suppose that under those circumstances I could have any partnership with you in the government? For I had lost the intelligent partner; and the foolish one I saw abandoned to the company of a multitude of base men, not governing but supposing he governed, being in fact under the sway of men such as I have mentioned.

[*When he was expelled I could do nothing but work for his restoration.*]

What was I to do in this situation? Was I not forced to do as I did, that is, as a precaution against e envious calumnies, to give no further heed to political affairs; and to attempt by all means to bring about a renewal of the greatest possible friendship between you and Dion, in spite of your separation and disagreement? You are yourself a witness to the fact that I never relaxed my efforts to bring this about. And at last, though with difficulty, we did reach an agreement to the effect that I should take ship for home, since 317 you were involved in a war; but that, when peace was made, Dion and I were to return to Syracuse; and you on your side were to invite us. Such is the history of my first journey to Syracuse and of my safe arrival home again.[6]

[*You induced me to return by promising to reinstate Dion in case I did so.*]

When peace was made, you summoned me the second time, but not in accordance with the terms of our agreement. Instead you wrote to me to come alone, and said that you would send for Dion later. The result was that I refused to go and was even
b estranged from Dion at that time, for he thought it advisable for me to give heed to you and go. Next there arrived a year later a trireme with a letter from you, and before all the other matters of the letter came the statement that, if I came, all Dion's affairs would be arranged to suit me; otherwise they would not. I hesitate to say how many letters came from you at that time and from others in Italy and Sicily on your
c account, and to how many of my friends and acquaintances letters came, all urging me to go and begging me by all means to do as you wished.

[*My mission was hopeless but I did my duty.*]

It was the opinion of all, beginning with Dion, that I ought to set sail and not shirk the duty. To be sure I urged them to consider my advanced age and maintained that you would not be able to hold out against those who would try to set us at variance in the hope that we might quarrel. I observed then and I observe now in regard to great and swollen fortunes in general,
d whether they belong to private citizens or to monarchs, that the greater they are, the more numerous and the more degraded are the informers and the debasing

boon-companions that they breed. Than this there is no greater evil begotten of wealth and other forms of power. Nevertheless, throwing all these considerations to the winds, I went, for I reflected that I must not let any of my friends bring the charge against me that because of my love of ease he had lost all his property, when it need not have been lost.

[*After my arrival you kept putting me off with promises while you robbed Dion of his property.*]

When I had come (you are of course acquainted e with all that happened from that time on), I naturally, in accordance with the terms agreed on in our letters, urged, in the first place, that you should contract with Dion a relationship that I mentioned and reinstate him. If you had then followed my advice, possibly the result would have been better than the actual course of events for you, for Syracuse, and for the rest of the Greeks. That is the verdict of my own intuition. In the second place I urged the plea that Dion's property should remain in the hands of his friends and not be 318 distributed among those who did acquire it. You know who they were. Furthermore, I thought that the income which he regularly received every year ought all the more to be sent, rather than otherwise, now that I was present. Successful in none of these pleas, I asked leave to depart. Thereupon you induced me to wait till the next year and promised that you would sell all Dion's property, send half to Corinth, and reserve the rest for his son.

[*You then accused me of plotting against you, so as to frighten me away.*]

b There are many promises I might mention that you made and failed to keep in any way, but because they were so numerous, I must cut short my account. Accordingly, when you had sold all the property without Dion's consent, after promising not to do so unless he did consent, then, Sir Marvellous, you added the finishing touch to all your promises in the most wanton fashion. You hit upon a scheme neither noble nor brilliant nor honest nor advantageous, namely, to frighten me off, while I was supposedly ignorant of what was going on, in order that I might not even ask c for the dispatch of the money. When you had driven Heracleides into exile—unjustly, it seemed to the Syracusans and to me—then, because I joined Theodotes and Eurybius in pleading with you to rescind the order, you, finding here a good enough excuse, said that it had long been clear that I cared nothing for you and thought only of Dion and Dion's friends and connexions, and that now, when Theodotes and Heracleides, who were friends of Dion, were under accusation, I was leaving no stone unturned to prevent their meeting with their deserts.

[*The result of my loyalty to Dion is the enmity that now exists between you and me.*]

d So much for our political partnership. If you have detected any other aversion to you on my part, you are right in thinking that it all came about in this way.

You need not be surprised, either, for any intelligent man would justly think me base if I had been induced by the greatness of your empire to betray my old friend and host, whose misfortunes were due to you—who was, moreover, to put it mildly, not inferior to you—and to prefer you, who were in the wrong, and to do e everything you ordered, obviously bribed by gifts of money. For that is the only motive that would have been imputed to me for going over to you, if I had gone over. So these events, brought about in this way, through your fault resulted in the enmity and the incompatibility that exist between us.

[*The falsehood of your statement that I prevented reforms is proved by a certain conversation.*]

The argument following continuously on what I have just said has now come pretty much to the subject which is the second on which I said I must defend myself.[7] Observe then and consider attentively whether 319
anything I say seems to you false and not true. I assert that when Archedemus and Aristocritus were in the garden, about twenty days before I left Syracuse for home, you said the same thing you do now in criticism of me, namely, that I cared more for Heracleides and all the others than for you. You asked me, moreover, in their presence whether I remembered, directly after my arrival, urging you to plant settlers in b
the Greek cities. I confessed that I did remember and that I still thought it the ideal course to take. I must also repeat, though, Dionysius, the remark that

was made directly afterwards. I asked you whether I had given you merely this advice by itself or whether I added something to it. And you answered very furiously and contemptuously indeed, so you supposed (for what was then the object of your contempt is now no longer a dream but a reality),[8] you said with a very
c forced laugh, if I remember: 'You bade me do all these things after receiving instruction or not at all.' I replied that your memory was excellent. Then you said: 'Instruction in surveying, or what?' And I thereupon did not say what it occurred to me to say, for fear lest for a brief word my way might be closed instead of open to the departure to which I was looking forward.[9]

[*My present statement that I do approve of those reforms must make my position clear.*]

The purpose, however, of all that I have said is this. Stop slandering me by saying that I prevented you from planting settlers in Greek cities that barbarians had
d destroyed, and from lightening the burdens of the Syracusans by transforming your government from tyranny to kingship. In the first place there is no lie less appropriate to me that you could tell to my discredit; and further, I could, in addition to what I have said, if there were anywhere to be seen a competent tribunal, furnish even clearer evidence than this that it was I who urged this course and you who were unwilling to act. At any rate it is not difficult to put it down in black and white that the accomplishment

of these plans would have been the best thing for you, for the Syracusans, and for all the other Sicilian Greeks. Well, sir, if you deny saying what you said, e I have my requital. If you admit it, you will thereupon conclude that Stesichorus was wise, imitate his recantation,[10] and shift your position from the false to the true story.

Introduction to Epistle VII

The seventh epistle is much the longest and most valuable of the Platonic letters. Even critics who reject most of the other letters accept the seventh as genuine. The greater part of it consists of Plato's defence of his political activity. He relates the story of his own life, so far as it throws light on his political ideals, and gives a detailed account of his dealings with Dionysius the Younger, explaining his motive in going to Sicily and the reasons for his failure to carry out his plans. This *Apologia pro Vita Sua* was probably composed first and later fitted into the framework in which we have it. This framework is a letter of advice to the friends and companions of Dion.

The joints between Plato's defence and his letter of advice are so rudely constructed that the artifice is transparent. In addition to these two elements in the letter, insertions of philosophic matter were made, probably by Plato himself. Here again the junction is not concealed. In fact Plato uses the second person singular and speaks of a word as *uttered* (rather than *written*) in a way that leads to the conclusion that in this insertion Plato was utilizing a transcript of an oral lecture. The following scheme will make clear the relation of the elements in the letter:

I. Introduction (323 e 7–324 b 7).

II. Account of his political thought and activity to the end of his first visit to the court of Dionysius the Younger (324 b 8–330 b 7).
(Transition paragraph 330 b 8–330 c 8.)

III. Advice to the friends of Dion (330 c 8–337 e 2).
(Transition paragraph 337 e 3–338 a 2.)

IV. Continuation of the story of his dealings with Dionysius (338 a 3–351 a 1) containing an insertion whose object is to stigmatize as fraudulent all accounts of Plato's philosophy that have been published by Dionysius or others. It falls into four sections:

A. An attack on those who have published accounts of Plato's doctrines (341 a 8–342 a 1).

B. Proof that the reality of things cannot be expressed in words (342 a 1–343 a 4).

C. Further explanation of the nature of reality (343 a 4–344 d 2).

D. Digression convicting Dionysius of indifference to and ignorance of Plato's philosophy (344 d 3–345 c 3).

V. Impassioned defence of Dion (351 a 1–351 e 2). (Concluding paragraph 352 a 1–352 a 7).

In parts II and IV only one reference is made to the friends of Dion (326 e 4, 5), and that reference may well have been inserted as a note when the letter was thrown into its present form.

The advice to Dion's friends was composed shortly after Dion's death (353 B.C.). The circumstances were as follows. After the final expulsion of Dionysius' forces from the citadel of Syracuse (354 B.C.) the popular opposition to Dion became unrestrained. Dion as an extreme measure caused Heracleides to be executed. The result was fatal for Dion. One of his trusted friends, Callippus, an Athenian, assassinated him and became leader of the Syracusan mob. After thirteen months the city was taken from Callippus by Hipparinus, nephew of Dion and son of Dionysius the Elder.

Meanwhile Dion's friends found a refuge at Leontini, where Hicetas was in command. They evidently wrote to Plato asking him for his support in the

desperate situation in which they found themselves. They were without a leader but were considering the claim to leadership of Hipparinus, who, setting out later from Leontini, expelled Callippus from Syracuse.

Parts II and IV, containing Plato's defence, were probably written not long before the rest of the letter. His claim to be responsible for Dion's success in Sicily (326 e) points to a date soon after Dion's original capture of Syracuse, so that we may suppose that Plato was working on it between 356 and 353 B. C. There may be a political purpose in the mention in this letter of Theodotes and Heracleides and in the statement that Dionysius quarrelled with Plato for preferring them (Dion's friends) to him. The main theme of the letter is, however, a restatement and a defence of Plato's political ideals and a justification of the policy that he had preached and that Dion had attempted to carry out in Sicily. It may be compared with the *Antidosis* of Isocrates written at about the same time. The two defences illustrate well the difference in the character of the two men. Plato was divinely inspired with a message for mankind; Isocrates was the guardian of a store of worldly wisdom.

There are indeed some striking facts which suggest that the seventh epistle and the *Antidosis* have a more than accidental similarity of purpose. The *Antidosis* has been called the first Greek autobiography. Its claim may perhaps be challenged in favour of the seventh epistle, although it appeared in its present form shortly before Plato's autobiography, as we have it, was completed. Both the *Antidosis* and the epistle can be pretty accurately assigned to the early part of the year 353 B. C. The *Antidosis*, however, was clearly composed, like the epistle, in sections, and it would be impossible to say whether Plato or Isocrates composed his defence first. I have already pointed out the

probability that Plato began to write in 356. Since Isocrates in the *Antidosis* shamelessly appropriates from Plato's *Apology* whatever he can in the way of argument or commonplace, it is not unreasonable to guess that the idea of defending his life at all was equally unoriginal and may have been suggested by the autobiographical matter of the seventh epistle. In any case Isocrates' defence is vastly inferior to Plato's as an autobiography as well as in other respects.

In the most striking feature which is common to the two works, however, Isocrates is plainly the originator. In the middle of his speech (101–139) he introduces a eulogy of his most famous pupil, Timotheus, who had recently met his death shortly after incurring the disfavour of the Athenian people. This inserted eulogy, probably composed later than the rest of the *Antidosis*, is also a defence of Timotheus against the current charges that had caused him to leave Athens. Now in the seventh epistle we have a striking parallel to this, for Plato likewise there adds a defence and exoneration of Dion, his most famous pupil, who had recently died, while his reputation suffered from charges that circulated to his discredit. The defence of Dion is so much in Plato's mind that he returns to it again and again in a digression from whatever topic he is discussing. Isocrates puts all the feeling that he is capable of expressing into his encomium of Timotheus; but Plato far surpasses him in the poignancy of his utterance over Dion. No one can read Plato's lament for his beloved disciple and doubt that he possessed the fullest measure of poetic feeling.

In defending Dion it is noteworthy that Plato recurs in particular to one charge that evidently stung him to the quick. Three times in the seventh epistle (327 d; 331 d; 351 c) he insists that it was an essential part of Dion's policy to avoid bloodshed in carrying out his

reforms. Doubtless it was Dion's execution of Heracleides that made a defence on this point necessary. There must, however, be some explanation for Plato's so frequently and emphatically asserting Dion's innocence. Someone had cast a shaft at Plato and Dion that struck and rankled. We find that shaft, I am convinced, in the *Antidosis* (127), where Isocrates in praising Timotheus points out that he never caused revolutions or executions, and asserts that a general must be considered great, not because he has succeeded in a single stroke of fortune, but only when through all manner of difficulties his conduct remains reasonable and blameless. This is so appropriate to Dion that, written when it was, it can refer to no one else. When, moreover, we find, a few paragraphs further on (131), emphasis laid on Timotheus' freedom from haughtiness, misanthropy, and hostility to the people, precisely the faults that Plato himself warned Dion against (Ep. IV, end), the suspicion becomes a certainty that Isocrates, driven to jealousy by the success of Dion, could not praise his own pupil without resorting to malicious references to the shortcomings of Plato's disciple.

The *Antidosis* contains Isocrates' bitterest attacks on Plato. They are frequent and unmistakable. He belittles Plato's activity in writing laws (79–83), hints at his lack of success as a public lecturer (148), and finally (258–269) attempts to wrest from him bodily his claim to be a philosopher, since the philosophy that can really make men virtuous nowhere exists. He directly disputes Plato's statement that knowledge of right and wrong must be based on metaphysical studies (Ep. VII, 344 b). Isocrates not only purloins the thoughts and words of Plato in this work; he even attempts to oust him from the eminence he has attained as a philosopher, surely the most brazen performance in literary annals.

It need not be doubted that Dion's exploits, which thrilled the whole Hellenic world, inflamed Isocrates with the jealousy which prompted him at the age of eighty to attempt by sophistry to foist himself into the position that Plato had gained by patiently neglecting for a generation the arts that had won for Isocrates an easy and ephemeral reputation. The sight of Plato's success shocked him out of his complacency and filled him with jealousy. Plato characteristically ignored the rest of his attacks; only when Isocrates twitted him with the civil strife and executions that followed from Dion's success, was he so sensitive to the blow that he passionately took up the defence of Dion.

The relation I have pointed out between the *Antidosis* and the seventh epistle can hardly be accidental; by no stretch of the imagination can it be supposed to be the work of a forger. The play of personality and the marvellous timeliness of the letter in each detail are such that no writer of fiction, however versed in psychology, has ever equalled the impression of reality that they produce. The writer of the Platonic Epistles must have been the greatest historical novelist that ever lived, and that while unknown to fame, or else no other than Plato. We have Plato's style, Plato's thought, Plato's very soul in the letters. Do they come from a forger? *Credat Iudaeus Apella.*

Epistle VII

Plato to the Friends and Companions of Dion, Prosperity. 323 e

[I. INTRODUCTION. *I will take your part if you adhere to Dion's policy, which originated with me. I will tell you how I came to adopt it.*]

In your letter you urged me to believe that your political convictions are the same as Dion's were; and

in this connexion you exhorted me to lend your cause
324 such aid as I can by action or by speech. My reply is that I will aid your cause if your views and your aims really are the same as Dion's; if they differ from his, I will take time to think about it. But what was Dion's policy, and what were his aims? To that question I think I could give an answer based not on conjecture but on sure knowledge. For when I first came to Syracuse—I was about forty years old—Dion's age was the same as that of Hipparinus[1] now, and he at
b that time arrived at a conclusion that he never departed from. He believed in liberty for the Syracusans under the guidance of the best system of laws. Consequently no one need be surprised if Hipparinus too were to be divinely led to the same conclusion and to come to agree with Dion's political creed.

[II. Life of Plato. *In my youthful enthusiasm I welcomed the government of the Thirty.*]

The origin of this creed is a tale that young and old[2] may well hear, and I will try to tell you the story from the beginning, for the moment is opportune. Once upon a time in my youth I cherished like many another the hope, directly I came of age, of entering upon
c a political career.[3] It fell out, moreover, that political events took the following course. There were many who heaped abuse on the form of government then prevailing, and a revolution occurred.[4] In this revolution fifty-one men set themselves up as a government, eleven in the city, ten in the Piraeus (both of these

groups were to administer the market and the usual civic affairs), and thirty came into power as supreme rulers of the whole state. Some of these happened to be relatives [5] and acquaintances of mine, who accord- d
ingly invited me forthwith to join them, assuming my fitness for the task. No wonder that, young as I was, I cherished the belief that they would lead the city from an unjust life, as it were, to habits of justice and really administer it; so that I was intensely interested to see what would come of it.

[*Their excesses, however, soon disillusioned me.*]

Of course I saw in a short time that these men made the former government look in comparison like an age of gold. Among other things they sent an elderly man, Socrates, a friend of mine, who I should hardly be ashamed to say was the justest man of his time, in e
company with others, against one [6] of the citizens to fetch him forcibly to be executed. Their purpose was to connect Socrates with their government, whether he 325
wished or not. He refused and risked any consequences rather than become their partner in wicked deeds. When I observed all this—and some other similar matters of importance [7]—I withdrew in disgust from the abuses of those days.[8] Not long after came the fall of the thirty and of their whole system of government.

[*Again the execution of Socrates under the democracy left me no confidence in that form of government.*]

Once more, less hastily this time, but surely, I was moved by the desire to take part in public life and in b

politics. To be sure, in those days too, full of disturbance as they were, there were many things occurring to cause offence, nor is it surprising that in time of revolution men in some cases took undue revenge on their enemies. Yet for all that the restored exiles displayed great moderation. As it chanced,[9] however, some of those in control brought against this associate of mine, Socrates, whom I have mentioned, a most
c sacrilegious charge, which he least of all men deserved. They put him on trial for impiety and the people condemned and put to death the man who had refused to take part in the wicked arrest of one of their friends, whose exile had coincided with their own exile and misfortunes.

[*Consideration of the situation led me to conclude that a radical change was needed and that philosophy alone could produce real rulers.*]

Now as I considered these matters, as well as the sort of men who were active in politics, and the laws and the customs, the more I examined them and the more I advanced in years, the harder it appeared to me to administer the government correctly. For one thing
d nothing could be done without friends and loyal companions; and such men were not easy to find ready at hand, since our city was no longer administered according to the standards and practices of our fathers. Neither could such men be created afresh with any facility. Furthermore the written law and the customs were being corrupted at an astounding rate. The result was that I, who had at first been full of eager-

ness for a public career, as I gazed upon the whirlpool e
of public life and saw the incessant movement of shifting currents, at last felt dizzy, and, while I did not cease to consider means of improving this particular situation and indeed of reforming the whole constitution, 326
yet, in regard to action, I kept waiting for favourable moments, and finally saw clearly in regard to all states now existing that without exception their system of government is bad. Their constitutions are almost beyond redemption except through some miraculous plan accompanied by good luck. Hence I was forced to say in praise of the correct philosophy that it affords a vantage-point from which we can discern in all cases what is just for communities and for individuals; and that accordingly the human race will not see better days until either the stock of those who rightly and genuinely b
follow philosophy acquire political authority, or else the class who have political control be led by some dispensation of providence to become real philosophers.[10]

[*In Italy and Sicily I came to the conclusion that a life of luxury is fatal to character and to just government.*]

This conviction I held when I reached Italy and Sicily on my first visit. Upon my arrival, moreover, I found myself utterly at odds with the sort of life that is there termed a happy one, a life taken up with Italian and Syracusan banquets, an existence that consists in filling oneself up twice a day, never sleeping alone at c
night, and indulging in all the practices attendant on that way of living.[11] In such an environment no man

under heaven, brought up in self-indulgence, could ever grow to be wise. So marvellous a temperament as that is not in nature. That a man should grow up sober-minded would also be quite out of the question; and one might make the same statement about the other qualities that go to make up excellence of character. Neither can a city be free from unrest under any laws, be those laws what they may, while its citizens think
d fit to spend everything on excesses, meanwhile making it a rule, however, to avoid all industry except such as is devoted to banquets and drinking-bouts and pains-taking attention to the gratification of lust. It is inevitable that in such cities there should be an unending succession of governments—tyranny, oligarchy, democracy—one after another, while the very name of just and equal government is anathema to those in control.[12]

[*At Syracuse I found in Dion an apt pupil, who adopted my views and renounced luxurious living.*]

Now holding this conviction in addition to the former,
e I travelled on to Syracuse. Perhaps it was chance, but certainly it looks as if a higher power was at that time contriving to lay a foundation for the recent events in which Dion and the city of Syracuse were concerned, for more too, I fear, unless you now follow the advice I am giving you the second time.[13] But what can
327 I mean when I say that my visit to Syracuse at that time was the beginning of everything? In my intercourse at that time with the young Dion, as I set before him in theory my ideals for mankind and advised

him to make them effective in practice, I seem to have been unaware that I was in a way contriving, all unknown to myself, a future downfall of tyranny. At any rate Dion, who was very quick of apprehension and especially so in regard to my instruction on this occasion, responded to it more keenly and more enthusiastically than any other young man I ever met, and resolved b to live for the remainder of his life differently from most of the Greeks in Italy and Sicily, holding virtue dearer than pleasure or than luxury. On that account the life he led until the death of Dionysius vexed somewhat those who passed their time in accordance with tyrannic wont.

[*After the death of Dionysius the Elder, Dion saw an opportunity to put into effect my political ideals.*]

After that he felt in his heart that he would not always be alone in holding this belief, which he had arrived at under the guidance of right reasoning. In fact he saw it growing in others too, not many, but at c any rate in some, and took note. He thought that Dionysius might perhaps become one of these through the co-operation of the gods. Moreover, if he were to become such a one,[14] the result for him and for the rest of the Syracusans would be the attainment of a life beyond all calculation blessed. Furthermore he felt it to be absolutely necessary that I come to Syracuse as soon as possible to lend a hand in the work. He remembered how readily he had by the operation of our mutual intercourse arrived at a desire to live the noblest d

and best life. If, accordingly, he were now to succeed in his attempt to bring about the same result once again in the case of Dionysius, he had great hopes of creating, without bloodshed or slaughter or such misfortunes as have actually occurred, a happy and genuine way of living throughout the land.

[*He persuaded the younger Dionysius to send for me and also persuaded me to make the attempt to convert Dionysius and so to set up the ideal commonwealth.*]

Dion, when he had rightly come to this conclusion, persuaded Dionysius to send for me, and himself sent and entreated me by all means to come as soon as
e possible, before certain others [15] fell in with Dionysius and diverted him to a way of life other than the best. Here is Dion's message, even if it is rather long to repeat: 'What combination of circumstances,' said he, 'more promising than that which is at this moment offered us by a sort of miracle, are we to wait for?'
328 Then he mentioned Italy and Sicily under one government, his own influential position in that government, Dionysius young and interested, emphasizing his situation in respect of philosophy and education. Furthermore his own nephews [16] and kindred might readily be won over to the doctrine and the way of life that I always preach, and they would be just the persons to help win over Dionysius. 'Now, if ever, then,' said he, 'will be realized any hope there is that the world will ever see the same man both philosopher and ruler of a great city.'

[*I decided to make the journey in the hope of effecting a great reform.*]

Such arguments he used and a great many more like b
them. As for my own decision, on the one hand
I feared the outcome in the case of the young men; for
young men have sudden impulses and often quite con-
tradictory ones. On the other hand I knew that Dion
had naturally a solid character and that he had now
reached middle age. Hence as I considered and
debated whether I should hearken and go, or what
I should do, the view nevertheless prevailed that
I ought to go, and that if anyone were ever to attempt
to realize my ideals in regard to laws and government, c
now was the time for the trial. If I were to convince
but one man, that in itself would ensure complete
success.

[*If I had deserted Dion and had failed to do my best to further the cause of Philosophy, I should have had to blush for my own weakness.*]

Such were the considerations that inspired and em-
boldened me to leave home on this journey. I was not
guided by the motives that some men attributed to me,
but chiefly by a concern for my own self-respect.
I feared to see myself at last altogether nothing but
words, so to speak,—a man who would never willingly
lay hand to any concrete task, for I should practically
have been guilty of disloyalty—in the first place [17] to
the ties of hospitality and friendship that bound me to d
Dion. He was really exposed to considerable danger.
Suppose something were to happen to him, or suppose

he were expelled by Dionysius and his other enemies, and were to come to me an exile and to question me, saying: 'Plato, I have come to you an exile not for want of soldiers or of horsemen to defend myself against my foes, but for lack of the arguments and the eloquence that I knew you, more than others, could wield to turn the minds of young men to virtue and
e justice so as to establish in all cases mutual friendship and alliance. Because you failed to supply me with these, I have left Syracuse and here I am. Your treatment of me, however, is not the most disgraceful part of your conduct. Surely on this occasion you have, so far as in you lay, proved traitor, not to me only, but also to Philosophy, whose praises you are always singing and of whom you say that the rest of mankind treat her
329 ignobly. Moreover, if I had chanced to be living in Megara, you would certainly have come to support me in the cause to which I summoned you; or else you would think yourself the very meanest of men. As the situation is, do you suppose you will ever escape the charge of cowardice by pleading the distance to be travelled, the long voyage and the great hardships? Not by a great deal.' To these accusations what plausible reply could I make? None is possible.

[*When I arrived I found Dion alone among foes who presently secured his expulsion.*]

So I went, thereby following reason and justice as
b closely as is humanly possible. For such reasons as I have described, I forsook my own pursuits, and they

were not undistinguished, to come under a tyranny, a form of government seemingly inconsistent with my doctrines and my character. In doing so I cleared myself in the sight of Zeus Xenios [18] and left no ground of complaint to the cause of philosophy, which would have suffered reproach if I had turned weakling and had by refusing to play a man's part brought disgrace upon myself. When I arrived, for I must be brief, I found the whole environment of Dionysius seething with cabals and with malicious reports to the government about Dion. I took his part as best I could, but I could do little; and in about the fourth month, on c the ground that Dion was plotting against the government, Dionysius put him aboard a small boat and expelled him dishonourably. Thereupon all of us who were friends of Dion were in terror lest Dionysius should accuse and punish someone else for complicity in Dion's plot. As for me a rumour actually got abroad in Syracuse to the effect that I had been executed by Dionysius because I was responsible for the whole course of events.

[*Dionysius now took precautions to prevent my departure.*]

When Dionysius saw that we were all in this state, d he was afraid that our fears might result in something worse, and set about winning us all over by a show of cordiality. Incidentally he was active in consoling me, bidding me feel no anxiety and begging me by all means to remain. There really was no honour for him in my taking flight from him, but rather in my remain-

ing, which explains the great pretence he made of requesting it. The requests of tyrants we are aware have in them something of compulsion. So to gain his
c end he prevented my departure. He took me to the citadel and planted me in a place from which there was no longer any possibility of a shipmaster accepting me as a passenger, unless Dionysius not merely took no steps to prevent it, but unless he actually dispatched himself the messenger with orders to accept me. Otherwise neither merchant nor embarkation official would have permitted me to set forth alone, but would at once have arrested me and have taken me back to Dionysius, especially since the news had now at last
330 been spread, just the opposite of the former report, that Dionysius was marvellously fond of Plato.

[*Dionysius, moreover, was attracted to me, though he feared to give himself over entirely to Philosophy.*]

What was the situation, though? For the truth must be told. He did indeed grow more and more to like me as time passed and as he learned to know my life and character; but he wanted me to commend him more than Dion, to think him rather than Dion a special friend. In fact his ambition in this respect was sur-
b prising. He shunned, however, the best method of attaining his object, if it could be attained at all,—that is, of course,[19] by receiving instruction and hearing me discourse on philosophy, to become my intimate friend and disciple. The reports circulated by our enemies made him afraid he might somehow be entangled and

so Dion have accomplished his design. I, however, waited patiently through it all and bore in mind the original purpose of my visit, namely, the hope that he might in some way become enamoured of the philosophic life; but his resistance carried the day.

[III. Counsel to the friends of Dion. *Here I interrupt my story to insert my advice to you, the friends of Dion.*]

Now the time I devoted to my first visit to Sicily and to my stay there was the result of all these causes. Afterwards I left home and visited Sicily once more at c the urgent invitation of Dionysius. I must explain later why I went the second time and that all I did was reasonable and right, for the benefit of those who inquire what I hoped to gain by going. First, however, in order to avoid the mistake of dealing with secondary matters as if they were of primary importance, I must advise you as to your proper conduct in view of recent events. Here is my message.[20]

[*A statesman, like a doctor, must insist, before he gives advice, upon the adoption of a proper régime.*]

One who advises a sick man living in a way to injure his health, must first effect a reform in his way of living, d must he not?[21] And if the patient consents to such a reform, then he may admonish him on other points? If, however, the patient refuses, in my opinion it would be the act of a real man and a good physician to keep clear of advising such a man; the act of a poltroon and a quack on the other hand to advise him further on

those terms. The same thing holds in the case of a city, whether it have one master or many. If a government that proceeds in orderly fashion along the right course, seeks advice about its advantage in some matter, it would be the act of an intelligent man
e to give advice to such a community. In the case, however, of those who are altogether astray from the path of right government, and will by no means consent to go on the track of it, who on the other hand give
331 notice to their adviser to keep his hands off the constitution under penalty of death if he disobeys, and order him to cater to their wishes and desires by pointing out the easiest and quickest method of attaining them permanently, in that case I should think the adviser who consented to such conditions a poltroon; the one who refused, a real man.

[*The statesman should not use force, but should give advice where it will be useful.*]

This being my firm conviction, whenever anyone asks my advice about any of the most important concerns of his life, such as the acquisition of wealth, or
b the proper régime for body or soul, then, in case I think that his daily life is fairly well regulated, or that when I give him advice on the matter about which he consults me, he will consent to follow it, under these circumstances I do counsel him with all my heart and do not stop at a mere formal compliance. If, however, he either does not ask my advice at all, or shows plainly that there is not the least likelihood of his taking the

advice I give him, to such a man I do not go self-invited with advice. Constraint I will not use, even though it be my own son. A slave I would advise and constrain too, if he refused to obey. Father or mother c I think it sinful to constrain, unless they are suffering from mental derangement. As long as they are leading a consistent life that suits them, though it does not me, I would neither estrange them by useless admonitions, nor on the other hand would I play the subservient flatterer and provide them means to satisfy desires that I myself had rather die than be addicted to. The same policy should also be a rule of life for the wise man in dealing with his city. If he thinks that the constitution d of his city is imperfect, he should say so, unless such action will either be useless or will lead to his own death; but he must not apply force to his fatherland by revolutionary methods. When it is impossible to make the constitution perfect except by sentencing men to exile and death, he must refrain from action and pray for the best for himself and for his city.

[*We advised Dionysius to adopt a proper régime that would gain him faithful friends of the sort that are the strongest support of a government.*]

In this same fashion I will advise you, just as Dion and I used to advise Dionysius. We advised him, in the first place, to lead the sort of life day by day that would be most conducive to self-control and would e enable him to win loyal friends and companions. Thus he would avoid the plight of his father, who, when he had come into possession of many large cities of Sicily

that the barbarians had devastated, was unable to resettle them and to set up in each a trustworthy government composed of his friends. For such a service he could trust neither those unconnected with him, no matter
332 what their origin, nor even the younger brothers [22] whom he had brought up himself and had raised from private life and poverty to the height of power and affluence. None of them was he able to develop by the influence of eloquence or instruction or benefactions or kinship, so that he could trust him as a partner in the government; and in this he was seven times inferior to Darius, for Darius [23] trusted those who were not brothers and had not been brought up by him, who had only been his associates in the assault on the Mede and the eunuch,
b and distributed among them seven provinces, each larger than the whole of Sicily. In these men moreover he found faithful allies who neither attacked him nor each other; and in his career we see an ideal example of the character which the statesman and the good king must display; for the laws which he framed have been the preservation of the kingdom of Persia even up to now. Take again the Athenians,[24] who, though they were not themselves the founders, took over many Greek cities that had been invaded by the barbarians but were still inhabited. Nevertheless they
c maintained their empire for seventy years, because they possessed in the various cities men who were their friends. Dionysius, however, who brought together all Sicily into one city because in his wisdom he trusted no one, all but met with disaster. He was in want of

tried and true friends; and there is no surer sign of a man's moral character than this, whether he is or is not destitute of such friends.

[*When Dionysius had put his own life and his friendships on a solid foundation of sober living, he might carry out practical reforms that would greatly strengthen his empire.*]

So Dion and I gave Dionysius this advice. Since he had been treated by his father as he had, and so had had no experience of education or of suitable instruction, d he must in the first place [regulate his daily life]; then when he had thus made a start, he must win to friendship with himself and to moral harmony others from among his kinsmen and companions; but especially must he become such a one himself, for in this quality he had shown himself remarkably deficient. We did not put it so plainly—that was not safe—but we veiled our meaning and constantly argued that anyone who takes this course will be prosperous himself and will cause the people whom he rules to prosper; and that on the other hand any other course will have just the opposite result. When he had progressed in the way e we mapped out, and had developed in himself an intelligent and constant character, he might recolonize the deserted cities of Sicily and so unite them by laws and institutions that they would be a resource to him and to each other for meeting the attacks of the barbarians. Thus he would not merely double the size of the 333 empire he had inherited, but would really multiply it many times. For if this plan were realized, he might

readily reduce the Carthaginians to greater subjection than that of Gelo's[25] time, in contrast to his father, who had lately consented to pay tribute to the barbarians.[26] Such were our words and our exhortations when we were supposedly plotting against Dionysius, according to the tales which flowed from many sources and which, prevailing with Dionysius, brought about Dion's expulsion and threw us into a state of terror.

[*Dion could not convince Dionysius and resorted to force. Again Dion failed to convince the populace of Syracuse that he had their true welfare at heart.*]

b To complete the story of the great events that happened in a brief space, Dion returned from the Peloponnesus and from Athens and gave Dionysius a practical lesson,[27] When, however, he had twice freed their city and restored it to them, the Syracusans then reacted toward Dion in exactly the same way as Dionysius had. For when Dion undertook to educate him and train him, that he might become a king worthy of his office, and planned on such terms to be his ally throughout life, Dionysius hearkened to the calumnia-
c tors who declared that everything that Dion did at that time was part of a plot against the government. His plan, they said, was that Dionysius, when his intelligence had yielded to the spell of education, should lose interest in the government and should put it in Dion's hands. Dion would then usurp the throne, and expel him from his domain by fraud. Such reports carried the day then; and so they did again a second time, when circulated among the Syracusans; and most

monstrous and disgraceful the victory was for those responsible.

[*It was indeed an Athenian who murdered Dion, but Athens should rather be judged by the other Athenian, Plato, who was loyal to his friend.*]

Now I must explain to those who urge me to take a hand in the present situation what it was that happened.[28] I am myself an Athenian; I was Dion's friend and d ally; and I went to the tyrant to effect a reconciliation between them. In my struggle with the calumniators I was defeated. When Dionysius, however, tried to persuade me with honours and gifts of money to lend him the support of my testimony and my friendship to give colour to the expulsion of Dion, he failed completely.[29] Now, after this, Dion on his return to his native land enlisted in his company two men who were e brothers and like me came from Athens.[30] His friendship with them, however, was not based on philosophy but on such social activities as are current among most of those who call themselves friends. Their comradeship is a product of mutual hospitality and of initiations into the different mysteries; and so was that of these two friends who accompanied Dion on his return. Their friendship was founded on such relations as these and on their services to his expedition. Having arrived in Sicily, when they saw that Dion was the victim of 334 the calumnies that were circulated among the Sicilians, who had been liberated by him, to the effect that he was plotting to make himself tyrant, they not only proved false to the comrade to whom they were bound

by ties of hospitality, but practically assassinated him with their own hands, inasmuch as they stood by with arms in their hands to lend aid to the murderers.

Now I do not ignore their dishonour and their wickedness, nor do I comment on it; for there are now and will be hereafter many others who will make
b it their business to repeat that strain. I do, however, take exception, when it is said of Athens that such men are a blot on her honour. For I maintain that he is also an Athenian who refused to betray this same man, when by so doing he might have gained both wealth and numerous honours. His attachment to his friend had originated not in any low-bred friendship, but in mutual participation in liberal training; in which alone a man endowed with intelligence must put confidence, rather than in kinship of soul or body. Hence the city does not deserve to suffer reproach because of
c the slayers of Dion, as if they had ever been men of any importance.

[*I advise you to be guided by justice and to subject yourselves to laws. Greed and tyranny are always baneful here and hereafter.*]

All that I have been saying is intended as advice for the friends and relatives of Dion, but I have now a special communication to add, as I give the same counsel and the same discourse now the third time to you my third audience. Let not Sicily nor any city anywhere be subject to human masters—such is my doctrine—but to laws. Subjection is bad both for
d masters and for subjects, for themselves, for their

children's children, and for all their posterity. The attempt to enslave others is altogether disastrous, and greed for such plunder is a trait of mean-souled and short-sighted characters,—men who know nothing of what is good or what is just, here or hereafter, in God's sight or in man's. Of this truth I attempted first to convince Dion, secondly Dionysius, and now the third time you. Be then convinced of it for the sake of Zeus who saves the third time.[31]

Be guided also by the example of Dionysius and Dion, for of those two the one who would not be con- e
vinced is now leading an ignoble life,[32] while he that was convinced has met a noble death; for when a man makes the highest ideals his aim for himself and for his city and accepts the consequences, in his fate there is nothing amiss or ignoble. None of us are born immortal, nor would being so bring happiness, as most people think. Nothing good or evil worth considering befalls that which has no soul. Only to a soul either 335
in the body or separated from it can good or evil occur. We must at all times give our unfeigned assent to the ancient and holy doctrines which warn us that our souls are immortal, that they are judged, and that they suffer the severest punishments after our separation from the body. Hence we must also hold it a lesser evil to be victims of great wrongs and crimes than to be doers of them. The man who crams his money-bags while his b
soul starves does not listen to these doctrines, or, if he does, he laughs them to scorn, as he supposes, and on every side ruthlessly snatches like a beast whatever he

hopes will provide[33] him with food or drink or the satisfaction of that brutal and gross pleasure that has no right to be called by a name derived from the goddess Aphrodite. He is blind and does not see that consequences attend the abominable wickedness of his acts of violence ;[34] for each wrong-doing adds its weight to a burden which the sinner must drag with him, not only
c while he lives his life on earth, but after he has returned to the underworld whence he came,—a journey unhonoured and miserable altogether and always.

[*The rule of justice might have been established and have enlightened the world if Dionysius had consented to follow Philosophy, or if Dion had not perished.*]

Now I convinced Dion when I explained to him these doctrines and others of the sort, so that I have every reason to be angry with his slayers in a certain way exactly as with Dionysius. In both cases I and all the rest of mankind, you may say, received the greatest injury. For the slayers of Dion made away with the man who intended to make justice effective, while Dionysius would not consent to put justice into
d practice throughout his empire. He possessed great power ; and if in his empire philosophy and political power had really been united in the same man, its glory would have shone forth among all men, Greek and barbarian, and would in itself have brought home to them the true belief, namely, that neither city nor individual can attain happiness except through a life wisely conducted under the rule of justice, whether a man be guided by his own sense of justice or be brought up

and trained in righteous habits under the control of holy men. In preventing this Dionysius inflicted an injury e in comparison with which I count the others slight indeed.

The slayer of Dion does not know that his action has had the same result as that of Dionysius. I am certain, as far as a man can express himself confidently in the case of a man, that if Dion had come into power, he would never have adopted any other form of government than the following. In the first place, after he had brought cheer to Syracuse, his native city, by 336 putting an end to her slavery, and had established the forms of freedom, thereupon he would by all means have brought the citizens under discipline by instituting an appropriate and ideal system of laws. After that he would have been eager to carry out the settlement of all Sicily and its liberation from the barbarians, driving out some of them and subduing the rest more easily than Hiero did. Moreover, if these results had been brought about by a man who was just, courageous, b sober, and a student of philosophy, the public would have adopted the same opinion about virtue as, in case Dionysius had been won over, would among practically all mankind have brought deliverance by its spread.

[*After two failures success may perhaps be yours.*]

As it was, though, some divinity or some evil spirit broke loose with lawlessness, with ungodliness and, worst of all, with the boldness of folly,—the soil in which all manner of evil to all men takes root and flourishes and later produces a fruit most bitter for

c those who sowed it. So folly a second time brought complete failure and disaster. Let me now, however, say nothing to bring ill luck on the third attempt.

[*Be sober and call in legislators to establish just laws.*]

Nevertheless I advise you, the friends of Dion, to imitate both his loyalty to his country and the temperate rule of living that he followed. Try, however, to carry out his plans under better auspices. What his plans were I have told you plainly. In case anyone cannot live in the Doric fashion that was the tradition of your fathers, but seeks instead to live like the slayers d of Dion, in Sicilian fashion, do not call upon him to aid you, and do not suppose that he can ever act loyally and righteously. Call upon the rest, however, to aid in the colonization of all Sicily and in bringing about equality under the law, both from Sicily itself and from the whole Peloponnesus. Have no fear of Athens either; for there exist there too men who surpass all mankind in virtue and who loathe the crimes of treacherous assassins.[35]

[*The victors must show clemency and obey the laws if civil strife is to be ended.*]

If, however, it is too late to resort to these measures e and you are forced to hasten because of the manifold and varied quarrels that are springing up every day among the factions, I suppose every man who has been granted by fortune even a small measure of correct opinion must be aware that those who have engaged in civil war can never have rest from their troubles until those

who are victorious in battle cease to keep feuds alive by sentencing men to exile or death, and cease to execute vengeance on the opposing party. Rather, exercising 337
self-control and drawing up equitable laws, that are designed to favour them no more than the defeated party, they must make their opponents observe the laws by bringing to bear two motives, shame and fear. They will inspire fear because they show that they have the stronger forces; shame because they are evidently stronger in resisting their inclinations and in their willingness and ability to be subject to the laws. There is no other possible means of putting an end to the misfortunes of a city torn by faction. When cities are b in that condition, of themselves they are wont to breed faction, enmity, hatred, mistrust.[36]

[*The victors should summon legislators to draw up equal laws.*]

Those then who are on any occasion victorious must, if ever they come to desire peace and security, of and by themselves select any men among the Greeks who, according to their information, are pre-eminent, men who are in the first place advanced in years, who possess wives and children at home and can reckon the most and the best and the most famous ancestors, and who own all of them sufficient property. As to their c numbers, fifty such men would be enough for a city of ten thousand population. These men they should summon from their homes with entreaties and offers of the greatest possible honours. When they have got

them, they should entreat and command them to draw up laws after taking an oath to give no advantage to conquerors or to conquered, but equal rights to the whole city alike.

[*Next the victors must obey the laws in all loyalty. Success can only be partial because my original ideal is no longer practicable.*]

After the laws have been drawn up, everything hinges on this. If the conquerors make themselves more completely subject to the laws than the conquered,
d there will be everywhere an atmosphere of security and happiness and deliverance from every trouble. If this is not done, do not call on me or on anyone else to join the man who refuses to obey my present injunctions, which indeed are akin to the measures that Dion and I attempted jointly to carry through for the good of Syracuse. These measures, however, came second. Those measures were first which we attemped to carry out with the help of Dionysius himself for the common good of all. Some fate too strong for man made havoc
e of our plans. This time you must try to put them into effect more happily through the kindness of fate and the favour of providence.

[IV. Life of Plato. *I return to the tale of my dealings with Dionysius.*]

Thus far my advice and injunctions and the story of my first visit to Dionysius. Next he who is interested may hear how reasonably and appropriately my second journey and voyage came about. You will remember

that my account of the period of my former stay in Sicily was completed, as I have pointed out,[37] before 338
I set forth my advice to the friends and companions of Dion.

[*I persuaded Dionysius to let me depart for a time.*]

After that[38] accordingly I employed every means in my power to persuade Dionysius to let me go; and we finally came to an agreement that he should do so. When peace, however, was made[39]—there was at that time war in Sicily—it was part of the agreement that Dionysius should send for Dion and me again, when he had made his position as ruler more secure. Meanwhile he begged Dion to believe that he had not been
driven into exile, but had merely been sent abroad for b
a time. I for my part agreed to return on these conditions.

[*When I was invited to return without Dion, I refused.*]

So when peace had been made, he did send for me, but asked Dion to wait another year and begged me by all means to come. Now Dion at this urged and entreated me to set sail; for reports did indeed frequently reach us from Sicily to the effect that Dionysius had changed and was now marvellously devoted to philosophy—which explains why Dion so insistently entreated me not to turn a deaf ear to the summons.
As for me, I knew to be sure that young men are often c
so affected in connexion with philosophy; nevertheless I thought it safer for the moment at least to leave both Dion and Dionysius entirely to their own devices; and

I incurred the ill will of both by replying that I was an old man and that furthermore the present arrangement did not agree with the terms of our previous compact.

[*Dionysius thereupon became interested in philosophy and determined to bring me back to Syracuse.*]

Next apparently Archytas paid a visit to Dionysius. I had before my departure brought about relations of hospitality and friendship between Archytas and the
d Tarentines and Dionysius. There were some others too in Syracuse who had had some instruction from Dion, besides still others who were crammed with certain scraps of second-hand philosophy. My opinion is that these men had been trying to hold with Dionysius on these matters the sort of conversation that would imply a thorough acquaintance with my beliefs on his part. Now Dionysius, among other natural qualifications that would make him a capable student, is extremely ambitious to excel. He was accordingly very likely pleased to be so approached and withal ashamed to
e have it become obvious that he had had no instruction when I was in the city. This would lead him to wish for a more explicit course of instruction; and this wish would be accompanied by the spur of rivalry. The reasons for his receiving no instruction during my former visit I have recounted previously in this present letter. At any rate when I had got safe home and had declined his second invitation, as I have just explained, Dionysius, I think, made it absolutely

a point of honour that no one should ever suppose that I had a poor opinion of his natural gifts and of his present capability and that, having also had some ex- 339
perience of his way of living, I was now in my disgust no longer willing to visit his court.

[*Dionysius provided for my comfort and saw that I had numerous testimonials of his interest in Philosophy.*]

Now it is my duty to tell the truth and put up with the possibility that someone may, when he hears what happened, be contemptuous of my philosophy and give credit for intelligence to the tyrant. For Dionysius the third time actually sent a trireme for me in order to make the journey easy for me. He also sent along one of the disciples of Archytas, Archedemus, whom he thought I valued most among the Sicilians—with others among my acquaintances in Sicily. b
All of these gave me the same account, namely, that Dionysius had made marvellous progress in philosophy. He also sent me a very long letter, because he knew how I was situated with respect to Dion and how eager Dion on his side was for me to set sail and go to Syracuse. He had in fact provided his letter with an introduction designed to fit the whole situation. It was expressed pretty much as follows: 'Dionysius to Plato.' Then after the conventional salutation without c
any preliminary he went on at once to say: 'If you consent and come now to Sicily, in the first place you will have the privilege of making any arrangement that suits you about Dion and his affairs. I am sure that

what suits you will be fair, and I shall agree to it. If you do not come, you will find nothing that affects Dion either personally or otherwise arranging itself to your liking.' These were his words; the rest would be long to repeat and not to the point. Letters also kept coming from Archytas and the Tarentines to sing the praises of Dionysius' devotion to philosophy and to inform me that, if I did not come now, it would mean a complete breach of the friendly relations that I had been instrumental in creating between them and Dionysius; and those relations were not lacking in political importance.[40]

[*The possibility of making Dionysius a convert could not be disregarded.*]

Now when I was thus urgently sent for,—when my friends in Sicily and Italy were pulling me, while those at Athens were, you might say, by their entreaties actually shoving me out of Athens,—once more came the same message, that I ought not to betray either Dion or my friends and companions in Tarentum. Besides, I knew anyway without being told that no one need be surprised if a young man on hearing a really great enterprise suggested, quick to grasp the idea, had yielded to the spell of the ideal life. It seemed accordingly my duty to make the experiment so as to arrive at a definite conclusion one way or the other; for I must not be guilty of betraying that very ideal and of exposing my beliefs to the reproach they would deserve if there were any truth in the reports I had received.

[*I accordingly did go a second time to Syracuse.*]

So I did set out under cover of these arguments, full of fears, as you might expect, and foreboding no very good result. At any rate in going I found that here at least it was really a case of the third to the Saviour,[41] for I was fortunately brought safe home again. For this I have to thank Dionysius next to God, because, when many wished to put me out of the way, he interfered and gave some place to conscience in his dealings with me.

[*I tested Dionysius' devotion to Philosophy by proposing to him a difficult course of training.*]

When I had arrived, I thought I ought first to put it b to the proof whether Dionysius was really all on fire with philosophy or whether the frequent reports that had come to Athens to that effect amounted to nothing. Now there is an experimental method for determining the truth in such cases that, far from being vulgar, is truly appropriate to despots, especially those stuffed with second-hand opinions; which I perceived, as soon as I arrived, was very much the case with Dionysius. One must point out to such men that the whole plan is possible and explain what preliminary steps and how c much hard work it will require; for the hearer, if he is genuinely devoted to philosophy and is a man of God with a natural affinity and fitness for the work, sees in the course marked out a path of enchantment, which he must at once strain every nerve to follow, or die in the attempt. Thereupon he braces himself and his guide

to the task and does not relax his efforts until he either crowns them with final accomplishment or acquires the faculty of tracing his own way no longer accompanied by the pathfinder. When this conviction has taken
d possession of him, such a man passes his life in whatever occupations he may engage in, but through it all never ceases to practise philosophy and such habits of daily life as will be most effective in making him an intelligent and retentive student, able to reason soberly by himself. Other practices than these he shuns to the end.

[*This method makes it unnecessary for the one who uses it to proceed further if the pupil is not really a convert to Philosophy.*]

As for those, however, who are not genuine converts to philosophy, but have only a superficial tinge of doctrine,—like the coat of tan that people get in the sun,—as soon as they see how many subjects there are to study, how much hard work they involve, and how
e indispensable it is for the project to adopt a well-ordered scheme of living, they decide that the plan is difficult if not impossible for them; and so they really do not
341 prove capable of practising philosophy. Some of them too persuade themselves that they are well enough informed already on the whole subject and have no need of further application. This test then proves to be the surest and safest in dealing with those who are self-indulgent and incapable of continued hard work, since they throw the blame not on their guide but on their

own inability to follow out in detail the course of training subsidiary to the project.

[A. DIGRESSION ATTACKING THOSE WHO HAVE EXPLAINED PLATO'S DOCTRINES. *I did not, however, give him a complete exposition of my doctrines, though he has since written something on the subject.*]

The instruction that I gave to Dionysius was accordingly given with this object in view. I certainly did not set forth to him all my doctrines, nor did Dionysius b ask me to, for he pretended to know many of the most important points already and to be adequately grounded in them by means of the second-hand interpretations he had got from the others.

[*No one who really understood the subject would ever publish a book on it, for words are inadequate to convey instruction in this matter.*]

I hear too that he has since written on the subjects in which I instructed him at that time, as if he were composing a handbook of his own which differed entirely from the instruction he received. Of this I know nothing. I do know, however, that some others have written on these same subjects, but who they are they know not themselves.[42] One statement at any rate I can make in regard to all who have written or who may write with a claim to knowledge of c the subjects to which I devote myself,—no matter how they pretend to have acquired it, whether from my instruction or from others or by their own discovery. Such writers can in my opinion have no real acquaintance

with the subject. I certainly have composed no work in regard to it, nor shall I ever do so in future; for there is no way of putting it in words like other studies. Acquaintance with it must come rather after a long period of attendance on instruction in the subject itself and of close companionship, when, suddenly, like
d a blaze kindled by a leaping spark, it is generated in the soul and at once becomes self-sustaining.

[*I do not think I should do any good by writing on this subject.*]

Besides, this at any rate I know, that if there were to be a treatise or a lecture on this subject, I could do it best. I am also sure for that matter that I should be very sorry to see such a treatise poorly written. If I thought it possible to deal adequately with the subject in a treatise or a lecture for the general public, what finer achievement would there have been in my life than to write a work of great benefit to mankind and to bring the nature of things to light for all men? I do not,
e however, think the attempt to tell mankind of these matters a good thing, except in the case of some few who are capable of discovering the truth for themselves with a little guidance. In the case of the rest to do so would excite in some an unjustified contempt in a thoroughly offensive fashion; in others certain lofty
342 and vain hopes, as if they had acquired some awesome lore.

[B. PROOF THAT THE REALITY OF THINGS CANNOT BE EXPRESSED IN WORDS.]

It has occurred to me to speak on the subject at greater length, for possibly the matter I am discussing would be clearer if I were to do so. There is a true doctrine, which I have often stated before, that stands in the way of the man who would dare to write even the least thing on such matters, and which it seems I am now called upon to repeat.[43]

For everything that exists there are three classes of objects through which knowledge about it must come; the knowledge itself is a fourth; and we must put as a fifth entity the actual object of knowledge which is b the true reality.[44] We have then; first, a name; second, a description; third, an image; and fourth, a knowledge of the object. Take[45] a particular case if you want to understand the meaning of what I have just said, then apply the theory to every object in the same way. There is something for instance called a circle, the name of which is the very word I just now uttered. In the second place there is a description of it which is composed of nouns and verbal expressions. For example the description of that which is named round and circumference and circle, would run as follows: the thing which has everywhere equal distances between its extremities and its centre. In the c third place there is the class of object which is drawn and erased and turned on the lathe and destroyed—processes which do not affect the real circle to which

these other circles are all related, because it is different from them. In the fourth place there are knowledge and understanding and correct opinion concerning them; all of which we must set down as one thing more, that is found not in sounds nor in shapes of bodies, but in minds; whereby it evidently differs in its nature from the real circle and from the aforementioned three. Of
d all these four understanding approaches nearest in affinity and likeness to the fifth entity, while the others are more remote from it.

The same doctrine holds good in regard to shapes and surfaces, both straight and curved; in regard to the good and the beautiful and the just; in regard to all bodies artificial and natural; in regard to fire and water and the like; and in regard to every animal; and in regard to every quality of character; and in respect to all states active and passive. For if in the case of any
e of these a man does not somehow or other get hold of the first four, he will never gain a complete understanding of the fifth. Furthermore these four—[names, descriptions, bodily forms, concepts]—do as much to illustrate the particular quality of any object as they do to illustrate its essential reality because of the inadequacy
343 of language. Hence no intelligent man will ever be so bold as to put into language those things which his reason has contemplated, especially not into a form that is unalterable,—which must be the case with what is expressed in written symbols.

[C. FURTHER EXPLANATION OF THE NATURE OF REALITY.]

Again, however, the meaning of what has just been said must be explained. Every circle that is drawn or turned on a lathe in actual operations, abounds in the opposite of the fifth entity, for it everywhere touches the straight,[46] while the real circle, I maintain, contains in itself neither much nor little of the opposite character. Names, I maintain, are in no case stable. Nothing b prevents the things that are now called round from being called straight and the straight round; and those who have transposed the names and use them in the opposite way will find them no less stable than they are now. The same thing for that matter is true of a description, since it consists of nouns and of verbal expressions, so that in a description there is nowhere any sure ground that is sure enough. One might, however, speak for ever about the inaccurate character of each of the four! The important thing is that, as I said a little earlier, there are two things, the essential reality and the particular quality; and when the mind is in quest of knowledge not of the particular but of the essential, each of c the four confronts the mind with the unsought (particular), whether in verbal or in bodily form. Each of the four makes the reality that is expressed in words or illustrated in objects liable to easy refutation by the evidence of the senses. The result of this is to make practically every man a prey to complete perplexity and uncertainty.

Now in cases where as a result of bad training we

are not even accustomed to look for the real essence of anything but are satisfied to accept what confronts us in the phenomenal presentations, we are not rendered
d ridiculous by each other,—the examined by the examiners, who have the ability to handle the four with dexterity and to subject them to examination. In those cases, however, where we demand answers and proofs in regard to the fifth entity, anyone who pleases among those who have skill in confutation gains the victory and makes most of the audience think that the man who was first to speak or write or answer has no acquaintance with the matters of which he attempts to write or speak.[47] Sometimes they are unaware that it is not the mind of the writer or speaker that fails in the test, but rather the character of the four,—since that is naturally
e defective. Consideration of all of the four in turn,—moving up and down from one to another,—barely begets knowledge of a naturally flawless object in a naturally flawless man. If a man is naturally defective,—and this is the natural state of most people's minds with regard to intelligence and to what are called
344 morals,—while the objects he inspects are tainted with imperfection, not even Lynceus[48] could make such a one see.

To sum it all up in one word, natural intelligence and a good memory are equally powerless to aid the man who has not an inborn affinity with the subject. Without such endowments there is of course not the slightest possibility. Hence all who have no natural aptitude for and affinity with justice and all the other noble ideals,

though in the study of other matters they may be both intelligent and retentive,—all those too who have affinity but are stupid and unretentive,—such will never any of them attain to an understanding of the most complete truth in regard to moral concepts. The study b of virtue and vice [49] must be accompanied by an inquiry into what is false and true of existence in general and must be carried on by constant practice throughout a long period, as I said in the beginning. Hardly after practising detailed comparisons of names and definitions and visual and other sense-perceptions, after scrutinizing them in benevolent disputation by the use of question and answer without jealousy, at last in a flash understanding of each blazes up, and the mind, as it exerts all its powers to the limit of human capacity, is flooded with light.

For this reason no serious man will ever think of c writing [50] about serious realities for the general public so as to make them a prey to envy and perplexity. In a word, it is an inevitable conclusion from this that when anyone sees anywhere the written work of anyone, whether that of a lawgiver in his laws or whatever it may be in some other form, the subject treated cannot have been his most serious concern,—that is, if he is himself a serious man. His most serious interests have their abode somewhere in the noblest region of the field of his activity. If, however, he really was seriously concerned with these matters and put them in writing, 'then surely' not the gods, but mortals 'have utterly d blasted his wits'.[51]

[D. Digression convicting Dionysius of ignorance of or indifference to Plato's philosophy.]

One who has followed my account of the reality and of the deviations from it will be assured of the fact that, whether Dionysius has written anything on the first and highest principles of nature, or anyone else great or small, that man in my opinion has neither received any sound instruction nor profited by it in the subjects of which he wrote. For if he had, he would have felt the same reverence for the subject that I do and would not boldly have cast it out unbecomingly and unfittingly. Neither did he put the doctrine in writing
e to aid his own memory, for there is no danger of anyone forgetting it, once his mind grasps it, since it is contained in the very briefest statements. If he wrote at all, his motive was an ignoble ambition either to be regarded as the author of the doctrine or as one not destitute of culture,—of which he was not worthy if he
345 was enamoured of the reputation of having it. Well, if a single interview had the effect of conferring this culture on Dionysius, it may be so; but how it had that effect, God wot, as the Theban says,[52] for on that occasion I described my doctrines to him in the way I have mentioned and once only; after that never again.

Here the question must be considered by anyone interested in discovering how events happened to take the course they did, what can be the reason why I did not recount my doctrines a second or a third time or oftener. Does Dionysius after only one hearing think

he knows, and does he adequately know, the subject, b either by that one hearing or by having discovered the truth himself or by learning it previously from others? Or does he suppose the doctrine unimportant? Or thirdly, does he suppose it to be not suited to him, but too high for him, so that he really would not be able to adapt his life to a concern for wisdom and virtue? If now he suppose the doctrines to be unimportant, he is at variance with many who testify to the opposite, who are altogether more competent to judge of such matters than Dionysius. If on the other hand he supposes that he has already discovered or been taught the doctrine, and considers it valuable for the cultural education of the mind, how, unless he is a monster among men, c could he ever so callously have insulted the one who has been pioneer and arbiter in this realm?[53] Let me describe the insults he inflicted.

[IV (continued from 341 a). *When Dionysius now held back Dion's income I determined to depart.*]

Next after no long interval, although he had up to that time permitted Dion to keep his own property and to enjoy the income, he now refused to allow the trustees to send it to the Peloponnesus, as if he had completely forgotten his letter. He said that the property belonged not to Dion but to Dion's son, who d was his nephew and his lawful ward. The transactions of that period were as I have stated up to this point; but when Dionysius acted in this way, I had an accurate insight into his enthusiasm for philosophy, and

had cause for anger, whether I would or no. It was then already summer and ships were sailing. I decided, however, that I had no right to quarrel with Dionysius rather than with myself and with those who had forced me to go the third time to the strait of Scylla that
e 'once more I might pass through baleful Charybdis;' [54] and that I would say to Dionysius that I could not remain now that Dion was so insultingly treated. He, however, tried to smooth it over and begged me to stay, for he considered it a bad thing for him that I should go
346 in person at once to report what had happened. On my refusing to wait he said that he would himself provide conveyance for me, for I had been planning to embark and sail in one of the merchant vessels. I was enraged and ready to take the consequences if I were interfered with, since I was obviously not guilty but an innocent sufferer.

[*Dionysius then made a proposal that forced me to stay on.*]

When he now saw that I had no thought of remaining, he adopted the following device to keep me over that sailing. He came the next day and made me a plausible proposal. 'Let Dion and Dion's affairs',
b said he, 'be cleared from our path, that you and I may no longer be constantly at variance over them.' 'For your sake', said he, 'I will do this for Dion. I propose that he receive his property and live in the Peloponnesus, not as an exile, but enjoying the right to go abroad and even to visit Syracuse, when he and I and you his friends all come to a mutual agreement. This, provided he contrive no plots against me,—and that you and your friends and Dion's friends here must

guarantee. You must look to him for your security. Let whatever money he receives be deposited in the Pelo- c
ponnesus and in Athens with anyone you please, Dion receiving the interest but having no authority to withdraw any of the principal without your consent. I have no great confidence that, if he had the use of this money, he would deal justly with me, for it will amount to a large sum; but I put more trust in you and your friends. See whether you find this offer satisfactory. If you do, stay on these terms another year and next season take this money and depart. I am sure that d
Dion too will be very grateful to you for your success in making this arrangement on his behalf.'

This proposal disgusted me, but in spite of that I replied that I would consider the matter and report my decision to him on the next day. Such was our agreement at that time.

[*I had no faith in Dionysius but knew that I was in his power.*]

Thereupon when I got by myself, I did take counsel in a state of great confusion. The argument, however, that was most important in guiding my counsel was this: 'Well now, suppose Dionysius really has no intention of carrying out any of his offers, yet, after c
I am gone, he may write a plausible letter to Dion and may also instruct a great many of his friends to write similar letters, containing his present proposal to me and asserting that he made the offer, and that I refused to accept it and altogether scorned any dealings with him. In addition to this he may be no longer willing

to send me home and may not only give no orders him-
347 self to any of the ship-masters, but may easily make it clear to every one that he is averse to my leaving. In that case will anyone consent to take me as a passenger, setting forth, as I must, from the house of Dionysius?' (Besides my other difficulties, I was living in the garden belonging to the palace, so that even the porter would refuse to let me out unless an order were sent him from Dionysius.) 'If, though, I wait over the year, I shall be able to write to Dion and let him know my situation and the state of my plans. If, on the other hand, Dionysius does carry out any of his
b promises, my achievements will not be altogether ridiculous, for probably Dion's property amounts to at least one hundred talents, if rightly estimated.[55] On the other hand if the course of events now foreshadowed falls out as it probably will, I am at a loss what to do with myself, but in spite of that I suppose I must hold out at least another year and try to expose Dionysius' schemes by actual test.' Having come to this conclusion, I told Dionysius on the next day that I had decided to remain. 'However', said I, 'I beg you
c not to suppose that I have authority over Dion, but to join me in dispatching letters to him to explain the decision that we have just come to and to ask him whether he is satisfied with it. If he is not, but wishes to make some other proposal, let him write at once. You meanwhile must take no further action about his affairs.' Such were our words, such was our agreement, pretty much as I have just stated it.

[*When it was too late to travel, Dionysius disposed arbitrarily of Dion's property.*]

So the ships now set sail, and it was no longer possible for me to travel, when Dionysius suggested to me that half the property should be Dion's and half his d son's. He promised to sell it and to give me half the sum realized to take to Dion, and to retain the other half in Sicily for the boy, since this was really the fairest arrangement. I was amazed at the proposal and thought it most absurd to dispute further. Nevertheless I said that we ought to wait for the letter from Dion and then send these proposals back to him. He, however, immediately afterward in a very headstrong way sold all of Dion's property, choosing his own e place and arrangements and buyers, and never uttered a sound to me about it at all. I for my part likewise had no further conversation with him about Dion's affairs, since I thought there was nothing to be gained.

[*My only object now was to escape from Syracuse.*]

Up to this point I had in this way taken the part of philosophy and of my friends, but from then on Dionysius and I lived, I looking out like a bird that 348 wants to fly away, he engaged in devising a way of frightening me off without paying me any of Dion's money. Just the same we called ourselves friends before all Sicily.

[*A mutiny now occurred among the mercenaries.*]

Now Dionysius attempted to decrease the pay of the more elderly of the mercenaries, contrary to his father's

practice, and the soldiers, infuriated by this, gathered in a throng and said they would not allow it. Dionysius then attempted to force them to yield by closing the
b gates of the acropolis, but they at once burst into a sort of barbaric war-song and rushed at the walls.[56] Dionysius, terror-stricken at this, granted everything and more besides to the peltasts then collected there.

[*The anger of the mercenaries was diverted to Heracleides.*]

Now a report quickly spread that Heracleides[57] was to blame for all this, and he, getting wind of the report, took himself off and disappeared. Dionysius then sought to capture him. Being at a loss, however,
c he summoned Theodotes to the garden, where I happened to be strolling at the time. The rest of their conversation I have no knowledge of and did not hear, but what Theodotes said to Dionysius in my presence I know and remember.

[*Dionysius agreed to spare Heracleides if he surrendered himself.*]

'Plato', he said, 'I am trying to persuade Dionysius here, in case I am able to bring Heracleides to this place to talk with us about the charges that are now being made, to accept my proposal that, if it seems undesirable for Heracleides to live in Sicily, he be
d allowed to take his wife and son and emigrate to the Peloponnesus and live there, not harming Dionysius and receiving the income from his property. I have for that matter already sent for him and I will send for him

now again. He may appear in answer to my former summons or in answer to the present one. In any case I beg and beseech Dionysius, if anyone finds Heracleides, whether in the country or here in the city, to let no harm befall him except to leave the country until Dionysius decides otherwise. Do you agree to e this?' said he, speaking to Dionysius. 'I do', said he, 'and if he appears at your house he will suffer no harm beyond what you have just mentioned.'

[*Troops, however, continued to pursue Heracleides.*]

Now on the afternoon of the next day Eurybius and Theodotes hastily approached me in a state of the greatest alarm and Theodotes asked me: 'Plato, were you present yesterday when Dionysius made the agreement with you and me about Heracleides?' 'Of course', said I. 'At this moment though', said he, 'there are peltasts scouring the country in quest of Heracleides, and he must be somewhere about. Do by all means', said he, 'go with us to Dionysius.' 349

[*I intervened on his behalf.*]

So we set out and entered the presence of Dionysius. The other two then stood silently weeping, while I spoke. 'These men', said I, 'are afraid you may take some step in regard to Heracleides that is contrary to the agreement you made yesterday. I think he has been seen making his way in this direction.' When he heard this he blazed up and turned every kind of colour[58] that an angry man would.

Theodotes fell at his feet and, seizing him by the

b hand, burst into tears and besought him to do no such thing. I broke in and comforted him with the words: 'Courage, Theodotes, for Dionysius will never go so far as to break the agreement of yesterday by doing otherwise.'

[*This led to a final break between me and the tyrant.*]

And Dionysius gave me a very tyrannical look and said: 'With you I made no agreement either great or small.' 'By the gods', said I, 'you did, not to do the very thing that this man is now begging you not to do.' And when I had said this, I turned my back and went out.

[*Heracleides managed to escape.*]

Thereupon he kept his men on the trail of Heracleides,
c but Theodotes sent word to him by messengers to make his escape. Dionysius then dispatched Tisias with peltasts and orders to pursue him. Heracleides, however, it was said, gained the Carthaginian domain a small part of a day ahead of them and so escaped.

[*I no longer lived in the palace, and a conversation with Theodotes led to bitter remonstrance from Dionysius.*]

After this Dionysius concluded that the old plot afforded a plausible ground for quarrelling with me so as not to pay over Dion's money. First he dismissed
d me from the acropolis, having found a pretext that the women had to celebrate some ten-day festival in the garden where I was living. So he ordered me to stay during this period outside in the house of Archedemus. While I was there Theodotes sent for me and expressed

a good deal of resentment and criticism of Dionysius for his recent behaviour. When Dionysius heard that I had visited Theodotes, he found here again a new pretext, akin to the former, for quarrelling with me, and sent someone to ask me whether I really had a meeting e with Theodotes when he sent for me. 'Certainly', said I. 'In that case', said the messenger, 'he bade me tell you that you by no means do well always to prefer Dion and Dion's friends to him.' After these words he never again sent for me to come to his house, since it was now plain that I was a friend of Theodotes and Heracleides and an enemy to him. He thought too that I was disaffected because Dion's property was being altogether dissipated.

[*Living among the mercenaries, I was in danger, but escaped from Syracuse by the intervention of the Tarentines.*]

So after this I lived outside the acropolis among the 350 mercenaries. Here there came to me amongst others those serving in the crews who were from Athens and so fellow-citizens of mine, and reported that I was unpopular among the peltasts, and that some of them threatened to make an end of me, if ever they caught me. I somehow, however, contrived the following way of escape. I sent to Archytas and to my other friends at Tarentum, telling them the situation in which I found myself. They discovered some pretext for an embassy from the city and sent Lamiscus, who was one of their b number, with a thirty-oared vessel. When he arrived,

he entreated Dionysius on my behalf, saying that I wanted to depart and urging him not to refuse. Dionysius granted his request and sent me off with an allowance of money for my travelling expenses. As for Dion's property, neither was there any further demand for it on my part nor was it restored.

[*At Olympia I found Dion and refused to join his expedition against Dionysius.*]

When I arrived at Olympia in the Peloponnesus, I found Dion in attendance at the festival [59] and reported what had happened. He, having called Zeus to witness,
c at once issued a summons to me and my friends and companions to make preparations for taking vengeance on Dionysius. From us vengeance was due for the crime of deluding a guest, so Dion said and believed; from him for unjust expulsion and exile. In reply I bade him invite my friends, if they were willing, 'but as for myself', said I, 'you and the others practically forced me to become a guest at the table and at the hearth of Dionysius and a partaker in sacred rites with him. He very likely thought because of the false reports that many were circulating that I was leagued with you in a plot against him and his government, and
d yet he scrupled to put me to death. For one thing, then, I am now scarcely of an age to help anyone in making war; and for another you have in me a common friend, in case you ever feel a desire to be friends with each other and want to accomplish some good. As long as you are bent on evil, invite others.' This I

said in detestation of my wanderings and misfortunes in Sicily.

[*Their quarrel has brought general disaster upon Sicily.*]

By declining instead of accepting my offers of mediation they brought upon themselves all the misfortunes that have now come upon them.[60] None of these, in all human probability, would ever have occurred if Dionysius had paid the money to Dion or had become e completely reconciled to him, for I would and I could easily have restrained Dion. As it is, their attacks on each other have everywhere brought a flood of misfortune.

[V. Defence of Dion. *Yet Dion was not selfishly ambitious.*]

Yet Dion's policy was the same, I should say, as my 351
own or any other decent man's ought to be, in regard to the exercise of power by himself and his friends in his own city, namely, by conferring benefits on the city to acquire for himself the greatest power and the highest honours.

[*He did not seek to enrich either himself or his party or his city at the expense of others.*]

By this I do not mean the man who makes himself and his companions and his city rich by forming a plot and collecting conspirators,—some man who is poor and unable to rule himself, a weakling enslaved to his desires,—who next puts to death all those who own b property (such he terms foes), then plunders their

possessions and exhorts his accomplices and companions never to lay it at his door, if they say they are poor. Nor do I mean the man who is honoured because of such a service to his city as distributing to the people by decrees the property of the few; nor the man who is head of a great city that has dominion over many smaller ones, and distributes unjustly to his own city the
c property of the others.[61] On such terms neither Dion nor anyone else will ever, so far as he acts voluntarily,[62] aim at a power baleful to himself and to his race for ever and ever. He will aim at a republic and at instituting the best and justest laws without resorting in the least to executions and bloodshed.

[*Neither was Dion the victim of his own simplicity. He could not cope with the depth of wickedness that surrounded him.*]

Now while Dion was in the act of achieving this, having chosen to be the victim of crimes rather than commit them,—though he took precautions against such attempts,—then, in spite of all, he stumbled at the very summit of his mastery over his enemies. Nor is it
d strange that he did, for while a good man dealing with wicked men, a man sober and sane of mind, would in general never be completely deceived in estimating the souls of such men, yet it would not be surprising if he were caught napping like a good helmsman, who might not altogether overlook the approach of a storm, but might overlook the extraordinary and unexpected magnitude of the tempest and so be overwhelmed by its violence. This is the mistake that Dion made, for

assuredly he was aware that those who proved his undoing were bad men. The depth, however, of their e folly and their villainy and their bloodthirstiness he did overlook, and so undone, he lies among the fallen, visiting Sicily with woe untold.[63]

[*With this my letter ends.*]

The advice I have to give after this narrative has mostly been given and so no more. I went back to the 352 subject of my second visit to Sicily because the necessity of dealing with it seemed forced upon me by the surprising and paradoxical nature of the events. If anyone after this account finds the events less paradoxical and and if anyone concludes that there was sufficient justification for what happened, then what I have said is fairly and adequately put.

Introduction to Epistle VIII

The eighth epistle was written after Hipparinus' conquest of Syracuse and before his death two years later (350 B. C.). It was probably written not long after the former event, for Plato's praise of Hipparinus (356 a) is hardly consistent with our knowledge of his later conduct. The letter has a political purpose, but Plato frankly admits that his programme is now no more than a prayer, a pious wish not likely to be granted (353 a 1). It may then be compared with the letters of Isocrates, written for publication, but unlikely to influence the course of events.

Owing to the success of Hipparinus this letter is more hopeful than the seventh. Plato can also take a more detached view than in the seventh letter, composed at a time when the poignancy of his grief for Dion was almost overpowering. One result of Hipparinus' victory had been the bringing to light of a son of Dion born posthumously to his wife Arete while she was held in prison by order of Callippus. The hopes that had been disappointed when Dion fell were now transferred to his nephew Hipparinus and to this infant son of Dion's, who flits across the page of history nameless and unfortunate.

The party of Dion were hardly in a position now to establish themselves in Sicily. Plato accordingly makes the strange proposal that they join forces with Dionysius to reintroduce an ordered government. The disorder that had followed Dion's death must have brought home to every inhabitant of Sicily the lesson that even a tyranny is better than chaos. The question was, how to stem the flood of lawlessness. Democracy was a name that covered a multitude of crimes. Selfishness

reigned while petty tyrants sprang up like mushrooms. Justice and loyalty were unknown. Under these circumstances the remnant of the faithful might be pardoned for seeing a possible deliverer in Dionysius, still firmly entrenched in Locri on the Italian mainland.

It is hard to say which aspect of Plato's proposals in this letter is most chimerical. The three-headed state would have fallen into fragments at the first shock. Dionysius sharing a kingdom with the infant son of Dion is a picture to equal that of the lion reclining with the lamb. It must have been apparent to Plato himself that he was preaching an ideal too high for mankind, that the millennium he had hoped for and prophesied must still remain a heavenly vision not to be realized on earth. His words notwithstanding are brave words. He is still fighting the good fight. [1]His purpose knows no recantation.

It must be confessed that in this letter as in the third and seventh Plato skilfully ignores the real issue in the Sicilian struggle. Dion had failed and his opponents had succeeded because he would not, and they did, yield to the universal desire to have the government nominally democratic in form. Dion's rule would have been more unpopular than that of Dionysius. Plato's purpose is to convince the Sicilians with their democratic views that it is absolutely necessary once more to submit to a well-established government. He proposes a compromise between the adherents of Dionysius and his opponents, between the advocates of monarchy and the advocates of democracy. The rulers are to be chosen among the descendants of Dionysius the Elder and of Hipparinus, father of Dion. The services of these men are set forth and the claims of the three candidates for kingship are made as impressive as possible. If we did not know that the only son of Dion who was alive at this time was a posthumous infant, we should be very

much surprised to have no mention either of his name or of any good qualities. His claim is based entirely on his father's services. Plato certainly was not acquainted with him, and his name either was not, or was not known to be, that of his grandfather Hipparinus.

Plato's faith in education and heredity explains the proposal to include an infant among the three kings. Plutarch's story that Hicetas, tyrant of Leontini, had the infant son of Dion put to death (*Dion* 58) is not improbable, but illustrates vividly the forces at work in Sicily at this time. The infant on whom were centred the hopes of Dion's followers could no more escape in the tumult of civil strife than could the posthumous son of Alexander of Macedon later in the century. It is sad to think that while Plato's letter could not stop the progress of disintegration in Sicily, it may have brought about the cruel extinction of his friend's family.

Epistle VIII

352 b Plato to the Friends and Companions of Dion, Prosperity.

[*My counsel is intended to benefit all parties in Sicily alike.*]

I will try to describe to you as well as I can the policy that you must adopt if genuine prosperity is to be yours. It is my hope that the counsel I give will be advantageous not only to you, though of course to you c especially, but also in the second place to all at Syracuse, and in the third place to your enemies and foes, with the exception of any who have perpetrated impious crimes. Such deeds are past redeeming; such stains

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no one can ever cleanse.[1] Consider now what I have to say.

[*The civil conflict that is raging involves on one side the partisans of tyranny, on the other the partisans of freedom. I will make bold to advise measures for the common welfare of both parties.*]

Now that the despotic power has been overthrown throughout all Sicily, you are at odds only on one issue. On one side are those who desire to restore the empire once more; on the other those who wish to set the final seal on their escape from tyranny.[2] Now the general opinion about such a situation is that the right d policy to adopt on any occasion is that one which will do the most damage to the enemy and the most good to your own side. It is, however, by no means easy to do a great deal of damage to the other side without also receiving a good deal yourselves in return. You need not travel to any distant land to see glaring instances of that sort of thing. You have on the spot in Sicily an object lesson in the recent course of events. You have seen how the two parties tried respectively to inflict injuries and to avenge them, and you need only tell the tale to others to give on each occasion adequate in- e struction on that point. You need hardly be at a loss for examples of that sort. Examples, however, of measures conducive to the advantage of all, friend and foe alike, or of measures involving the least possible damage to both sides, it is neither easy to discover nor, when one has discovered them, to put them into effect. One might as well resort to prayer as advise anything

of the sort, or attempt to speak of it. Well, let us
353 actually resort to a sort of prayer, for we should always appeal to the gods when we set about speaking or reflecting—a prayer, though, that I hope will find fulfilment.

[*Dionysius and Hipparinus once saved Sicily from dire disaster. The subsequent tyranny has already suffered for its faults; moreover you are not in a position to exact further vengeance.*]

Here is the message that our prayer indicates to us.[3] There is one family that has for the most part ever since the war began supplied commanders to you and to your enemies. That family was at one time put in command by your fathers, when they were reduced to utter helplessness,—at that moment, I mean, when Greek Sicily was in the greatest danger of being laid waste by the Carthaginians and so reverting altogether to barbarism. Under those circumstances two men were
b elected; Dionysius, who was young and warlike, to superintend the military activity for which he was fitted; and Hipparinus to be an older adviser. They were given the title of supreme commanders in defence of Sicily, in other words, tyrants.[4] Now you may attribute the deliverance of Sicily to a special providence, that is, to God, or to the superior qualities of the rulers, or to the combined operation of these two causes assisted by the action of the citizens of those days; be it as you choose to suppose. At any rate that was the way in which deliverance was brought to the men of that time. Now after such achievements it was perhaps

just that all should be grateful to their saviours. If, c
however, the despotic power has since that time wrongly misused the city's gift, for this the penalty is partly paid, partly still to pay. Yes, but what just penalty is there that can be enforced in their present situation? If it were possible for you to escape from them easily with no great danger or hardship, or for them to seize the government again without difficulty, in that case it would also be impossible for me to give you the advice that I am going to give.

[*Since civil war is leading you to utter ruin, you need to adopt a policy of moderation, a compromise between monarchy and democracy.*]

The actual state of affairs being what it is, you must bear in mind on both sides and keep recalling how many d
times, first in one camp then in the other, you have had great expectations and have supposed again and again that now only some little thing stood between you and complete success. Above all be mindful that in each case that little thing turns out to be a source of woes unnumbered; no goal is ever reached, but to the supposed end of the old is linked again and again the budding of a fresh beginning—a vicious circle that threatens to involve both parties, that of the tyrant and that of the people, in total destruction. You are face to face with e
the probability—may God avert it—that the Greek tongue will be all but silenced throughout the whole of Sicily, for that island will have come under the domination and have passed into the hands of Phoenicians or Opici.[5] Hence it behooves every Greek to throw him-

self into the task of preventing this catastrophe. If anyone else has a more suitable and a better remedy than the one I am going to suggest, he need only bring
354 it forward to deserve richly the title, Friend of Hellas. My own view at the moment I will try to make clear with all frankness on a basis of impartial justice. In fact I do speak as a sort of arbitrator between two parties, that of the former tyrant and that of his subjects, while with respect to each singly I am giving my old advice. Now as before it is my advice to any tyrant to avoid the name and the condition of a tyrant and to
b transform tyranny into kingship, if possible. That it is possible, however, is proved by the actual example of a wise and good man, Lycurgus, who saw that the related families in Argos and Messene, which had passed from kingship to despotic power, had in each case brought ruin on themselves and on their cities. Hence, alarmed for his own city, and for his family as well, he applied a remedy. He girded the kingship with a rope of safety, the senate, that is, and the ephorate—[6] with the result that his people have been gloriously
c preserved through these many generations, because law was made rightful lord and sovereign of men, and men no longer ruled the laws with arbitrary power.

[*Tyranny is not really a blessing to the tyrant: too much freedom leads to great evils and fosters tyrants.*]

It is my advice to every one to take this same course now. I urge those who are intent on establishing a tyranny to turn back and to flee for their lives from

that which is accounted happiness by men who are insatiably greedy and bereft of sense. Let them endeavour to put on the form of a king and to be subject to kingly laws, enjoying the highest honours by the consent of willing subjects and of the laws. Again I would d counsel those who are seeking to establish free institutions and to avoid the yoke of servitude as being evil, to be on their guard lest by inordinately desiring an unseasonable liberty they fall victims to the plague that visited their ancestors because the citizens of those days went to extremes in their refusal to be governed. Their passion for liberty knew no bounds.

The Sicilian Greeks, before Dionysius and Hipparinus came into power, were at that time, they supposed, leading a happy life, for they were living luxuriously and were at the same time ruling their rulers. They even stoned to death without any legal trial the ten e generals [7] who preceded Dionysius. They would be subject to no one, neither to lawful ruler nor to the reign of law, but would be altogether and absolutely free. That is the way they got their tyrants, for either servitude or freedom, when it goes to extremes, is an utter bane; while either in due measure is altogether a boon. The due measure of servitude is to serve God. The extreme of servitude is to serve man. The god of sober men is law; the god of fools is pleasure. 355

Since the law of nature in regard to these things is as I have stated it, I exhort the friends of Dion to

publish my words of advice to all the Syracusans as the joint counsel of Dion and myself. I will act as interpreter of the message which he, if he were alive and able, would now address to you. 'What message then', someone may say, 'does the advice of Dion convey to us about our present situation?' Here it is.

[*Let me tell you what Dion would suggest, if he were living: 'Adopt laws that emphasize and cultivate excellence in the soul. This will bring true happiness.'*]

'First of all, men of Syracuse, accept such laws as
b you see clearly will not turn your thoughts and desires to money-getting and riches. There are three things,[8] soul and body and money. Put in the place of highest honour the excellence of the soul; put next, that of the body, subject, however, to that of the soul; and in the third and last place put the honour paid to money, making it a slave to the body and to the soul. If an ordinance produced this effect, it would rightly be a part of your constitution, for it would result in the genuine
c happiness of those who observed it. The usage that applies the term 'happy' to the rich is itself miserable, being a foolish usage of women and children, and it renders miserable those that put confidence in it.[9] That these words of exhortation from me are true you will know by experience if you put to the test what I have just said about laws. Experience seems to be the surest touchstone for everything.

[*'To avoid disaster adopt as a compromise a constitutional monarchy, accepting as kings three descendants of Dionysius and Hipparinus, who represent different parties.'*]

'Once you have accepted such laws, since Sicily is in great peril, since, moreover, you are neither completely victorious nor yet decisively beaten, perhaps it d would be fair and advantageous for all of you to take the path of compromise between the two parties—your party on the one hand who dread the severity of the central government, and on the other hand the party who passionately desire to regain their power. It was their ancestors who once contributed most to deliver the Greeks from barbarians and so made it possible to discuss the form of government now. If destruction had come then, there would be no discussion now and no hope remaining whatever. As the case stands, then, let the party who desire freedom obtain freedom under a king, and let those who desire to be kings, be kings e responsible for their acts. Let law be supreme not only over the other citizens, but even over the kings themselves, in case they violate the constitution. Observing then all these provisions, with honest and upright intent, aided by the gods, set up three kings. Let the first be my son.[10] He has a double claim derived from me and from my father, for my father formerly rescued the city from barbarians, while I have lately freed her twice from tyrants, as you yourselves 356 can testify. In the second place raise to the kingship him who has my father's name, and is Dionysius' son.

In his case there are two reasons, his recent assistance to your cause and his unstained character. Though son of a tyrant, he is, by voluntarily conferring freedom upon the city, acquiring immortal honour for himself and for his race instead of an ephemeral and unjust tyranny. In the third place you must invite to become king of Syracuse by mutual consent him who is now
b in command of the hostile camp, Dionysius son of Dionysius—that is, if he will of his own free choice consent to assume the character of a king. He may be influenced to do so by dread of mischance and by compassion for his country's plight and for the untended state of temples and tombs.[11] There is the danger too that by giving rein to his ambition he may involve all in utter ruin to the ultimate delight of the barbarian. These three,[12] whether you give them the same powers as the Laconian kings have, or whether you make some diminution by mutual agreement, you must constitute kings in some such way as the following. It has
c already been told you, yet hear it once more.

['*You must establish justice and limit the power of the kings by giving authority to a council inspired by the principles of justice.*']

'If the race of Dionysius and Hipparinus are willing for the salvation of Sicily to put an end to their present misfortunes and to receive honours for themselves and their race, both now and hereafter, then on these conditions, as I said before, summon to a meeting such representatives as they choose to invest with full power to arrange an agreement. The representatives may be

Sicilians or foreigners or partly one, partly the other. Their number will depend on mutual agreement. When these have arrived, let them first establish laws and d a form of government that admits the arrangement that kings be given authority over rites in honour of the gods, and over all other rites that are due to the memory of former benefactors. To have jurisdiction over war and peace let them appoint guardians of the law, thirty-five in number, with assembly and senate. Let there be other courts for other matters, but in cases where the penalty is death or exile let the thirty-five constitute the court. In addition to these let there be judges selected each year from among the outgoing officials, one from e each office who is adjudged to have been the best and justest official. Let these during the next year judge all cases where it is a question of executing or imprisoning or deporting a citizen. Let a king not be permitted to act as judge in such cases; let him keep himself like a priest free from defilement with death or 357 imprisonment or exile.[13]

[*'Once a just government is established, the accomplishment of my plans for the restoration of Sicily will follow. May success crown your labours.'*]

'This was my plan for you while I lived and it is my plan now. At the time when I had with your help conquered my foes, if fiends in the form of guests [14] had not prevented, I should have set up a constitution according to my plans. After this, I should have colonized the rest of Sicily, if deed had followed thought, by taking from the barbarians the territory

they now occupy—excepting any of them who fought to the end against the tyrannic power on behalf of the
b general freedom—and then settling the former inhabitants of the Greek region in their ancient and hereditary seats. These same plans I now advise all to adopt in common and to execute, inviting every one to assist in their execution and considering anyone who refuses a common enemy. Really this is not impossible. If a plan exists in two minds and may readily be discovered by attentive consideration to be the best, it is hardly
c good judgement to consider it impossible. The two minds I speak of are that of Hipparinus son of Dionysius and that of my own son, for, if they were to agree, I believe that all the other Syracusans who have the city's interests at heart would be in accord. Now give honour with prayer to all the gods, and to the others whose due it is along with the gods, and do not desist from urging and calling upon friends and opponents gently and by every means, until the ideal that I have just described, like a heavenly vision presented to your
d waking sight, become through your efforts a visible reality, complete and successful.'

Introduction to Epistle VI

The sixth letter is probably the last composition we possess from Plato's hand. It must be assigned to some point in the last three years of his life (350–347 B. C.). Its genuineness has been attacked chiefly on two grounds. In the first place it is in disagreement with Strabo's account of Hermias. It seems, however, to have been proved by Brinkmann [*Rheinisches Museum*, N. F. 66 (1911) 226 ff.] that Strabo's account is untrustworthy and that Plato's epistle agrees with the evidence derived from other sources. In the second place the religious doctrines implied in the final benediction seem unplatonic to some scholars. There are, however, many students of Plato who see in him not only a thinker but a mystic. The man who wrote the *Timaeus*, the myths, and some passages in the *Laws* certainly did not confine himself to speculations that would pass muster as common sense. The style, the rhythm, the language, and the thought of the letter are characteristically Platonic. To prove this would require an elaborate treatise and it is to be hoped that such a treatise will some day appear. The letter is suspected not because it is unplatonic, but because it seems to out-Plato Plato. Where, though, shall we look for the quintessence of platonism if not in the old age of Plato himself?

The letter is written by Plato to serve as a charter of friendship and loyalty between Hermias, tyrant of Atarneus, on the one hand, and Erastus and Coriscus of Scepsis on the other hand.

Epistle VI

Plato to Hermias and Erastus and Coriscus, Prosperity. 322 c

In my opinion some god, who is willing and able to

befriend you, has good fortune in store for you, if you accept it wisely. You live near one another and your needs
d are such that you can be of the greatest mutual benefit. As for Hermias, neither abundance of cavalry or of other military resources nor the acquisition of gold could add more to his strength in all directions than would the gaining of steadfast friends of uncorrupted character.[1] As for Erastus and Coriscus, I say, old man that I am,[2] that in addition to this noble lore of Ideas they have need also of the lore of self-defence against the base and wicked, and of a sort
e of faculty of self-preservation. They are inexperienced because they have passed a large part of their lives with us, who are honourable, not wicked; and this explains my saying that they have need of those other things as well in order that they may not be obliged to neglect the genuine wisdom and to attend more than they should to the wisdom that is concerned with the life of man and his necessities. It seems to me, so far as I can
323 judge without having met him, that Hermias possesses this practical faculty naturally and that he has strengthened it by the skill that he has derived from experience.

What then is my message? To you, Hermias, I who know Erastus and Coriscus by experience better than you do, declare and assert and testify that you will not easily find men of more trustworthy character than these neighbours of yours. I advise you to cling to these men by every just means and to consider it no secondary matter to do so. Coriscus and Erastus in turn I advise

to cling to Hermias and endeavour by thus clinging to
one another to get knit together into a single bond of b
friendship. If any of you seems in any way to be
weakening this bond (for nothing human is altogether
stable),[3] send hither to me and my associates a letter
of complaint. I believe that letters sent by us here in
justice and reverence would, unless some great breach
had actually occurred, be better than any charm to heal
the wound and to unite you again in the formerly existing
friendship and partnership. If then all of us, both c
you and we, practise philosophy to the extent of our
ability, considering each man's circumstances, the
prophecy I have made will hold good. If we do
otherwise, I do not say what will happen, for it must
be words of good omen that I utter.[4] I say there-
fore that in all these things we shall be successful, if
God wills.

This letter all three of you must read—all together, if
possible; if not, two at a time—in common as far as
you are able, as often as you can. You must treat it
as a contract and a binding law, that is, a just law,[5]
combining in your oath-taking a not unenlightened d
seriousness with the jesting that is kin to earnest,[6]
as you invoke the god who is ruler of all things pre-
sent and to come,[7] and is rightful father of the ruling
active principle, to certain knowledge of whom, if we
genuinely practise philosophy,[8] we shall attain as far as
it lies in the power of human beings who are truly well-
endowed[9] to do so.

Introduction to Epistle I

The first epistle is certainly not Plato's in spite of the considerations urged by Apelt in his notes. The tone and style are commonplace; there is nothing in the letter characteristic of Plato. Furthermore Plato never occupied any such position in Syracuse as the author of this letter must have filled according to his statement in the first sentences. The situation described in the letter would fit either Dion or Philistus except that the language seems to imply that the writer was not a native Syracusan. It may well be a genuine letter directed to Dionysius; or it may of course equally well have been addressed to some other ruler of some other city. In any case it contains nothing of value except the quotations, whose original context is unknown. The careful avoidance of hiatus and the rhetorical tone in general lend colour to a view that is worth mentioning, namely, that this letter has been extracted from an historical composition of later times, in which by a common fiction it was attributed to Plato. In any case the letter is not an ordinary forgery though its attribution to Plato is a mistake.

Epistle I

309 a Plato to Dionysius, Prosperity.

After all the time I have been with you administering your government as your most trusted adviser—a position that gave you all the profit, while it fell to my lot to

bear the heavy brunt of hostile criticism (I know that no one will suppose that I consented to any of your over-cruel acts, for all your fellow-citizens can bear witness on my behalf, many of whom I championed b in time of need, and saved from no slight loss)— and after the many times when as supreme commander I kept your city safe, I have been dismissed with less respect than a beggar would deserve if he were dispatched by you and ordered to depart after being so long with you. In future I shall certainly consider my own interests in less benevolent fashion, while you, being the tyrant that you are, will live in solitude.

As for the gold, that splendid parting gift of yours, c Baccheius, the bearer of this letter, is returning it to you; for it was neither enough for my travelling expenses nor serviceable for my support later. On the other hand such a gift would be most disgraceful for you the giver, and not much less so for me too, if I were to accept it; hence my refusal. Obviously it makes no difference to you whether you receive or give away that amount of money; so, now you have it back, show someone else the same attentions that you have shown to me. Really your attentions to me have quite satisfied me.

It is also appropriate for me to repeat the words of d Euripides, that when you are sometime involved in other difficulties, 'thou'lt pray for such another at thy side.' I want to remind you also that most of the other tragedians, when they show on the stage a tyrant being slain by someone, represent him as crying out: 'Of

310 friends bereft, alas, I perish.' No one has ever depicted a tyrant perishing for lack of gold. The following poem is also approved by the intelligent.

'Not gleaming gold is rarest in the unhopeful life
of mortals.
Diamonds and couches of silver sparkle not to the
sight,
When weighed in the scales with a man.
Nor is there strength in fruitful acres of broad land
laden with bounty
As much as in the concordant thoughts of good men.'

b Farewell and know how great a loss you have suffered in me, in order that you may treat the others better.

Introduction to Epistle V

The fifth epistle may safely be regarded as spurious. The style is a good imitation of Plato's, but Plato's characteristic ardour and rhythmic utterance under the stimulus of certain ideas do not appear. No forger could imitate those. Since the thought is not particularly Platonic and since, moreover, the long defence of Plato's policy in abstaining from political activity in Athens would have been quite out of place in a real letter, there need be no hesitation in attributing the letter to a clever opponent of the Academy, who was desirous of fastening on Plato the stigma of favouring monarchy; in particular, of having helped Philip to the throne of Macedon, where once seated he reduced Athens to galling impotence. For among other echoes of a controversial attempt to represent the Academy as a breeder of tyrants, Athenaeus (XI. 506 e) informs us that it was by Euphraeus' advice that Perdiccas invited Philip to share the throne of Macedon. Hence Euphraeus and indirectly Plato were responsible for the existence of Philip, the powerful enemy of Athens.

The fifth epistle is then a malicious forgery. It purports to be a letter from Plato to Perdiccas (King of Macedon 365–360 B. C.) introducing Euphraeus, a pupil of Plato, and recommending him as an adviser who will be able to further the interests of the monarchy.

Epistle V

Plato to Perdiccas, Prosperity. 321 c

I have advised Euphraeus in accordance with your letter to look after your affairs and to make that his occupation. It is right that I should also give you

counsel, in all friendliness and solemnity, as they say,
d both in regard to the other matters that you mention and
in regard to the use you should now make of Euphraeus.
There are many services the man can render, but the
most important is a service that at present you are in
want of both because of your youth and because there
are not many to advise the young about it.

Each form of government has a sort of voice as if it
were a kind of animal. There is one of democracy,
another of oligarchy, and a third of monarchy. There
e are plenty of men who will assert that they understand
the science of these, but, except for some few, they are
far indeed from a thorough acquaintance with them.
Any form of government that utters its own voice to
god and man and duly acts in harmony with its voice,
is always flourishing and endures. When it copies
another it perishes. In this connexion you might find
Euphraeus useful to no small degree (though to be sure
he is a good man in other respects too), for I expect
322 that he will help to interpret the language of monarchy
as well as any of those who are in your service. If
you then make this use of him, you will yourself profit
by it and you will do him the greatest service.

If anyone, when he hears this, says: 'Plato appa-
rently pretends to know what is for the advantage of a
democracy, yet, though he has the right to address the
assembly and give them the best advice, he has never
taken the floor to utter a word'; say in reply that Plato
was born late in his country's history, and the people,
b when he came to them, were already rather well on in

years and had acquired from his predecessors the habit of doing many things at variance with his advice. 'For he would have been altogether delighted', you must explain, 'to advise the people as he might have counselled a father, if he had not supposed he would be risking his life in vain without any hope of accomplishing anything. That is just what I think he would do about advising me. If he thought I were incurable, he would bid me a hearty farewell and avoid giving any advice that concerned me or my affairs.' Farewell.

Introduction to Epistles IX and XII

The twelfth epistle is by general consent classed as a forgery. It was written to support the claim to authenticity of some spurious Pythagorean treatises. The ninth letter is also liable to suspicion. The forger who wrote the twelfth letter might well write a second spurious letter to make the first more plausible. The decisive consideration in both cases is the fact that in neither letter is there anything characteristic of Plato, anything in fact that a mediocre forger could not have written. We have an illustration in the tenth letter of Plato's ability to stamp even the briefest note with the vivid impress of his personality. Where that stamp is lacking we need not hesitate to pronounce judgement. Both the ninth and the twelfth letters are unplatonic forgeries. If proof is needed, it is sufficient to note that while Plato in Epistles VII and XIII uses the Attic form Ἀρχύτης, the forger of Epistles IX and XII has with characteristic pedantry employed in the salutation the Doric form of the name, Archytas.

Epistle IX

357 d Plato to Archytas of Tarentum, Prosperity.

e Archippus and Philonides and the rest have arrived with the letter which you gave them and with news of you. They carried through the business with the city without difficulty. In fact it was not in the least troublesome. They also described your position to us, saying that you are rather vexed that you cannot get released from public business. The fact that attending
358 to one's own affairs is pleasantest in life, especially if

one choose the sort of activity that you do, is clear to almost anyone. You must, however, consider this fact too, that each of us is born not for himself alone. We are born partly for our country, partly for our parents, partly for our friends. The various contingencies that overtake our lives also make many demands upon us. When our country herself calls us to public life, it would perhaps be strange not to respond, since one must otherwise at the same time give place to worthless men who b
do not enter public life for the best motive. Enough of this matter. I am taking care of Echecrates now, and I shall do so in future for your sake, for the sake of his father Phrynion, and also for the sake of the young man himself.

Epistle XII

Plato to Archytas of Tarentum, Prosperity. 359 c

We received with marvellous pleasure the commentaries that came from you and felt the greatest possible d
admiration for their author and thought the man to be worthy of those ancient ancestors of his. It is said that these men were Myrians, who formed part of those Trojans that were driven from their country in the time of Laomedon, brave men as the traditional tale shows. My own commentaries, about which you inquired, are not yet in a satisfactory state, but I have sent them to you just as they are. In regard to preserving them we
are both in agreement, so that no admonitions are e
needed.

NOTES

EPISTLE XIII

1. (360 a; p. 18) In the Greek, as Richards has shown, the salutation forms part of the first sentence with no stop after *εὖ πράττειν*. It is the use of this phrase with its double meaning 'to do right' and 'to prosper' instead of the usual *χαίρειν* that is the token of genuineness. In Epistles III and VIII Plato again alludes to the form of the salutation in the body of the letter.

2. (360 b; p. 18) It is not certain what works are here meant. Possibly the *Timaeus* is referred to as a Pythagorean treatise and the *Sophistes* and *Politicus* as 'classifications'.

3. (360 c; p. 18) While Archytas was himself a mathematician of no mean calibre, he might readily need the services of Helicon to acquaint him with the latest astronomical researches of Eudoxus.

4. (360 d; p. 19) Plato frequently remarks on the fickleness of the creature *ἄνθρωπος*. See Ep. VI, 323 b, and Ep. VII, 335 e.

5. (360 e; p. 19) Dionysius was ostensibly occupied with the war in Sicily. Up to the end of this paragraph we have a letter of recommendation for Helicon complete in itself and thoroughly Platonic. Another thoroughly Platonic paragraph is the disquisition on financial matters (362 a 2–e 1). The rest of the letter contains no decisive internal evidence for or against the theory that it was all written by Plato.

6. (361 a; p. 19) It is quite appropriate that Dionysius should order a statue of Apollo. We have other evidence of his devotion to the cult of Apollo. Compare also Ep. III, 315 b, and the fact that he named his son Apollocrates.

7. (361 a; p. 19) Sophrosyne, step-sister, as well as wife, of Dionysius and niece of Dion is meant.

8. (361 b; p. 20) Leptines was the bearer of this letter.

9. (361 b; p. 20) Dionysius the Elder had at last won the favour of the Athenian public just before his death and had gained the first prize in a tragic competition in the year 367. Plato sees the importance for Dionysius the Younger of maintaining that favour by suitable expenditure on festivities. It is possible that the expenditure on the Leucadian ship was made in performance of a 'liturgy' of another sort.

10. (361 c; p. 20) We should not expect two nieces of Plato to die at the same time. Neither should we expect his mother to be alive (in 366). Still the unexpected happens rather oftener in real life than in fiction.

11. (362 b; p. 22) Again we have the unexpected. What forger would have guessed that Dionysius' empire could not command unlimited credit? This passage may illustrate Dionysius' plundering of temples and inflating of the currency to help his financial standing.

12. (362 e; p. 23) If Plutarch is right (*Life of Dion*, xxi. 1) and the matter here discussed is the separation of Dion's wife Arete (sister-in-law and step-sister of Dionysius, niece as well as wife of Dion) from her husband and her union with a favourite of Dionysius, Plato certainly means to give the impression that he is observing Dion's conduct in the interests of Dionysius. His sympathy was really rather with Dion, as is shown by his subsequent refusal to return to Syracuse unless Dion was restored.

13. (363 a; p. 23) Plato's language implies that Timotheus, the Athenian general and statesman, was well known to be a pupil of Isocrates, Plato's great rival as an educator.

14. (363 a; p. 23) The dialogue referred to is the *Phaedo*.

15. (363 b; p. 23) This mention of a token reminds us of the introduction to the present letter. No letter has come down to us in which either of these formulas occurs. We do know that Plato recommended Polyxenus to Dionysius at a later time (Ep. II, 314 c 7).

16. (363 d; p. 24) Since the words for a ball and for an

astronomical sphere are the same in Greek, it is possible that Plato by a sort of pun uses the ordinary word for 'companions at ball-play' in the unusual sense 'fellow-students of the sphere'.

EPISTLE II

1. (310 b; p. 27) Plato uses the salutation *εὖ πράττειν* with a double meaning which I have not attempted to translate. Like the English 'to do well', it may mean not only to prosper but to act rightly.

2. (310 b; p. 27) See the index of proper names.

3. (310 d; p. 28) Neither Plato nor Dion was likely to be absent from the Olympic festival of 364. Compare Plutarch, *Life of Dion*, 17. It is plain from the account of Diodorus that the warfare between Arcadia and Elis did not prevent the holding of the games.

4. (311 a; p. 28) For a dialogue between Hiero and Simonides see Xenophon's *Hiero*. Conversations between Solon and Croesus and between Croesus and Cyrus occur in Herodotus, Book I. It is a reasonable conjecture that the other examples were also taken from well-known literary works.

5. (311 a; p. 29) Creon and Tiresias are of course found in the *Oedipus Tyrannus* and in the *Antigone* of Sophocles. Polyidus and Minos were characters in the *Polyidus* of Euripides. Agamemnon and Nestor are found in the *Iliad*. Palamedes was represented in company with Agamemnon in the *Palamedes* of Euripides.

The relations between Prometheus and Zeus are exhibited in the *Prometheus Bound* of Aeschylus. No doubt Plato talks to Dionysius rather like a schoolmaster, but that was almost certain to happen. He was a schoolmaster. A little consideration shows that we have here no pedantic collection of examples, but a very pointed selection of rulers who found it costly to disregard good advice.

6. (311 e; p. 30) Plato elsewhere speaks of his doctrine as *ἡ ἀληθινὴ φιλοσοφία* (Ep. X, c. 4, for example). This usage and the rhythm make it obvious enough how this

passage must be construed. Howald's proposal to emend by omitting *καὶ λόγον* is particularly unhappy, though he follows precedent in mistaking the Greek.

7. (312 a; p. 30) Plato courteously avoids the suggestion that Dionysius may have been too stupid or too frivolous to profit by his teaching (see Ep. VII, 339 a).

8. (312 c; p. 31) Among the teachers at the court of Dionysius were Aeschines and Aristippus.

9. (312 d; p. 32) This sphere seems to have been an orrery, that is, a device to represent the motion of the heavenly bodies.

10. (312 d; p. 32) The genuineness of this letter has been suspected because of the obscurity of the following passage and on account of the implication that Plato taught an esoteric doctrine not revealed in his dialogues. It is, however, noteworthy that Plato always veils in his works, by myth or metaphor, his belief in a supreme reason that rules the world. He feared apparently that an explicit statement of his monotheism or his deification of reason would give his opponents a pretext for denouncing him on the same charge that had proved effective against Socrates and others.

11. (312 e; p. 32) The translation here depends on one's solution of the riddle. I must confess that I have not completely solved it. Some light is thrown on it by the philosophical passage in the seventh Epistle (342 a–344 d) and by passages in the Dialogues. By the king is meant the divine reason (*νοῦς*) that rules all things, identical with the idea of the good mentioned in the *Republic* (Book VI, 508). The second and the third may possibly be the world of scientific knowledge (*διάνοια*) and the world of sense (*αἴσθησις*). By the human soul (*ἀνθρωπίνη* is emphatic) is meant the mind of man unemancipated from its bodily environment. This mortal mind tries to get at the reality of things through the medium of perception and scientific knowledge. The world of ideas, however, is visible only to spiritual intuition (*νοῦς*), which must be developed by a special course of training. The attempt to reduce the ideal vision to terms of ordinary understanding is responsible for the general refusal to accept it as

valid. Reality and truth can only be attained by transcending the natural powers of the mind.

12. (314 a; p. 34) Compare the prolonged system of education described in *Republic*, Book VII, which is ultimately to enable the soul to contemplate reality without the aid of sense.

13. (314 b; p. 35) Plato may have been giving instruction for more than thirty years, though the Academy had not been founded, or he may be referring to the disciples of Pythagorean philosophers, who taught the same doctrine.

14. (314 c; p. 35) Plato is quite serious here. He means to say that there is no explicit statement of his religious views in his published works. In all the dialogues he is, like a new Socrates, occupied, not in displaying his own wisdom, but, by the skilful use of dialectic, in annihilating the claims of others to scientific knowledge. Clearly this explanation seems rather inadequate when it is applied to such dialogues as the *Republic* and the *Phaedo*. Some latitude must, however, be left for emphasis and exaggeration in such a human document as this letter. In any case it is easier to imagine Plato making such a cryptic remark than to suppose a marvellously competent forger who would invent a paradox that must cause suspicion.

15. (314 d; p. 35) Plato's statement in Ep. VII, 338 d, confirms this estimate of Dionysius' natural ability.

16. (314 e; p. 36) The malicious gossip to the effect that Speusippus suffered from ill health because of luxurious living must have had some basis in fact. He need not have been personally known to Dionysius to ask for a loan of his private physician.

EPISTLE XI

1. (358 e; p. 38) A letter, that is, such as the third or the seventh Platonic Epistle, giving a detailed account of Plato's experience in Sicily.

2. (358 e; p. 38) Plato was sixty-seven years old and Alexander of Pherae was successfully practising piracy in the Aegean.

3. (359 a ; p. 38) The meaning and the provenance of this quotation from Hesiod are uncertain.

4. (359 a ; p. 38) Here I read *οἴονται* for *οἷόν τε* and insert *ἄν* after *πολιτείαν* in accordance with Richards's suggestion.

5. (359 a ; p. 38) Plato says the same thing in Ep. VII, 326 c, d.

6. (359 b ; p. 38) For prayer to the gods as a last resort see Ep. VIII, 352 e 5, and Ep. VII, 331 d 5.

7. (359 b ; p. 39) Lycurgus is one example of such a man. See Ep. VIII, 354 b. Plato had in his own life adopted the same attitude of waiting for a favourable opportunity See Ep. VII, 326 a 2.

8. (359 c ; p. 39) Here I read *διαπράξεσθαι* with Wilamowitz.

EPISTLE IV

1. (320 c ; p. 42) Plato expects those who have been initiated by him into the mysteries of the true philosophy to be a tribe of supermen.

2. (320 d ; p. 42) Lycurgus and Cyrus are the heroes respectively of Xenophon's work on the *Constitution of Sparta* and of his *Cyropaedia*. Plato refers to Lycurgus elsewhere (Ep. VIII, 354 b). Cyrus is also mentioned in the *Laws* (694 a). Among other famous men Plato would include Gelo (Ep. VII, 333), Hiero (Ep. VII, 336), and Darius (Ep. VII, 332).

3. (320 e ; p. 42) Theodotes and Heracleides (uncle and nephew) had been the real leaders of the popular party even under Dionysius (Ep. III, 318, and Ep. VII, 349). While they had welcomed Dion's aid against Dionysius, they were not disposed to acquiesce in his assumption of supreme power, no matter how noble his aims might be. Dion's situation is closely parallel to that of President Wilson in 1919. He lost the support of his countrymen because he could not bend to circumstances.

4. (321 a ; p. 43) Plato means to say : There is something stimulating about applause, even though it is the applause of

those who have no special claim to an expert understanding of the performance they applaud; for example, children. You must see in my remarks only applause, not an attempt at admonition.

5. (321 b; p. 43) Plato is evidently eager to know how Dion's plans for a reform of the constitution are proceeding. Plutarch tells us (*Dion* 53) that Dion's steps in the direction of putting into effect the ideas of Plato were very ill received.

EPISTLE III

1. (315 a; p. 46) The ordinary salutation at the beginning of a Greek letter is χαίρειν, *Rejoice*. Plato in his letters substitutes for this εὖ πράττειν, which has a double meaning like the English *to do well*.

2. (315 b; p. 46) In this hexameter line there seems to be a double meaning, which I have tried to retain in translating.

3. (315 d; p. 47) The explanation of the emphasis laid on this programme of political reform and colonization lies in the fact that this programme was the popular one. It was Dion's identification with it that gave him his temporary hold on the people. Hence the importance of meeting Dionysius' attempt to destroy the popularity of Dion and Plato by representing the latter as the enemy of reform.

4. (315 e; p. 47) Philistides is the reading of the manuscripts. Philistus is evidently meant.

5. (316 a; p. 47) The preludes of the laws are explained in the *Laws* of Plato (722 e). He would have the laws contain not only prohibitions, with penalties for misconduct, but exhortations to good conduct. These hortatory introductions he calls προοίμια, *preludes*, punning on the double meaning of the word νόμοι, *laws* or *tunes*. We find in the *Laws* many such preambles or preludes, many of which are written in an exalted style that differentiates them from much of the context. It is probable that Plato included in the *Laws* as written certain of these preludes that were composed in

Syracuse in 367–366 and were apparently issued by Dionysius as official proclamations.

6. (317 a; p. 49) For a fuller account of this first visit see Ep. VII, 327 c–330 b and 338 a, b. The two accounts are in close agreement.

7. (318 e; p. 53) This formal and awkwardly phrased transition to a new point has a close parallel in the transition paragraphs of Ep. VII, 330 b and 337 e.

8. (319 b; p. 54) Plato means to say: 'You thought you were slighting my political ideals. Really, though, that ideal has not been slighted, for Dion by his success has brought it to effectual realization. It is no longer a mere dream.'

9. (319 c; p. 54) Another account of the second visit is found in Ep. VII, 338 b–341 a and 345 c–350 b. The vividness and general agreement of these two different accounts in the same style of the same course of events are the most convincing proof that no one but Plato could possibly have composed them.

10. (319 e; p. 55) The English word *recantation* is derived from a Latin rendering of the Greek παλινῳδία, a resinging. The word derives its meaning from the story of Stesichorus of Himera, a writer of choral lyric who flourished about 600 B. C. Helen punished him with blindness for composing an ode which represented her as responsible for the Trojan war. Thereupon he wrote another ode contradicting the former and was restored to sight. The second ode was his palinode or recantation.

EPISTLE VII

1. (324 a; p. 62) The evidence of this passage agrees with the date (388 B. C.) usually assigned to Plato's first arrival in Syracuse. It has been supposed that the Hipparinus mentioned here was Dion's son. The objections to that view are stated in the introduction to Ep. VIII and in notes 10 and 12 on Ep. VIII. This Hipparinus is the same one who is mentioned in Ep. VIII, namely Dion's nephew and Dionysius' half-

brother, the son of Dionysius the Elder and of Aristomache. Since Dion was about twenty years old in 388, it follows that Hipparinus was not much more in 353, when Plato wrote. It would be a great mistake to pin Plato down to the exact year. In fact it is rather more probable that Hipparinus was born in 378 or a little later than otherwise. The mention of him here is due to the fact that after Dion's death his friends in Leontini were in doubt whom to take for a leader. Hipparinus presented himself as a possibility and Plato rather favours his leadership. In Ep. VIII we find that Hipparinus has taken the lead and has been successful in capturing Syracuse. In Syracuse was found, however, a posthumous son of Dion's who thereafter tended to share the claim of Hipparinus to the loyalty of Dion's friends.

2. (324 b; p. 62) The expression *νέῳ καὶ μὴ νέῳ* is a characteristic modification of a popular idiom. Compare pseudo-Lysias vi. 32 *οὔτε πρεσβύτερον ὄντα οὔτε νεώτερον*.

3. (324 c; p. 62) It is tempting to suppose that Xenophon's story (*Memorabilia* iii. 6) of Glaucon's haste to become a statesman may really be a pointed criticism of his brother Plato, for whom it would apparently be quite appropriate.

4. (324 c; p. 62) This was the so-called revolution of the Thirty. Only a contemporary who knew the facts would have spoken of this government as one of fifty-one men rather than of thirty. That contemporaries did consider the fifty-one the responsible authors of this revolution is amply proved by the exemption of just the men whom Plato specifies from the terms of the amnesty on the return of the exiles under Thrasybulus. (Compare Xen. *Hell.* ii. 4. 38, and Arist. *Ath. Pol.* 39. 6).

5. (324 d; p. 63) Plato's uncle Charmides and his cousin Critias were leaders of the ten and the thirty respectively. Plato himself was evidently connected in some way with the government in the early stages.

6. (324 e; p. 63) A full account of the attempt to make Socrates an accomplice in the execution of Leon of Salamis is found in Plato, *Apology* 32 c.

7. (325 a; p. 63) We probably have here a reference to

Critias' arbitrary execution of Theramenes. That Plato as well as Xenophon and Thucydides was an admirer of Theramenes is a probable inference from the language of Aristotle (*Ath. Pol.* 28. 5).

8. (325 a; p. 63) Either Plato withdrew from active association with the government of the thirty or he withdrew from Athens (to Thebes?). The latter seems more probable in view of the difficulty of remaining in Athens after deserting the government.

9. (325 b; p. 64) The condemnation of Socrates is said to have occurred 'by chance, as it were' (*κατὰ τύχην τινά*). Does this mean that it was due to some chance provocation given by friends of Socrates to the ruling politicians?

10. (326 b; p. 65) This paragraph is an echo of passages of the *Gorgias* and of the *Republic*. The miraculous plan for the reform of political constitutions is of course Plato's political creed, which is based on ethical and metaphysical foundations. The good luck is the opportunity of converting a young prince to the cause of philosophy. Since the *Republic* in its present form is almost certainly later than Plato's voyage to Italy and Sicily, it follows from his words here that it was not in the *Republic* that Plato first made the statement that the only hope of political salvation lay in the rule of philosophy. In fact the tone of the fifth book of the *Republic* affords ample evidence that Plato is there returning to the defence of a position that had been violently attacked at some period. Since Plato in the same part of the *Republic* returns in the same way to the defence of the proposition that women and property should be held in common, we are forced to look elsewhere for the original pronouncement of this proposition also. Was it in a lecture or in a dialogue that Plato first published to the world these doctrines that aroused hostility and ridicule? This is not the place to discuss the answer to that question. The date, however, of this pronouncement seems to have been about 392 B.C., shortly before the production of the *Ecclesiazusae* of Aristophanes, who is one of the scoffers, and shortly before Plato's departure from Athens on the voyage that eventually led him to Italy and

Sicily. One is tempted to argue *post hoc, ergo propter hoc*, and to suppose even that Plato's life was in danger at Athens for a time. This would explain his references to the danger involved in suggesting a change in the government. (See Ep. VII, 331 d.)

11. (326 c; p. 65) Plato expresses the same attitude toward Sicilian luxury in the *Republic* (404 d).

12. (326 d; p. 66) It was Plato's discussion of justice that angered Dionysius in 388, so that he expelled Plato ignominiously. In Athens, too, Plato evidently lectured to deaf ears.

13. (326 e; p. 66) This passage was evidently written when Dion was successful. A short note had to be inserted when the letter was published after Dion's death.

14. (327 c; p. 67) Here I read *αὐτοῦ* with Richards.

15. (327 e; p. 68) Among the certain others was no doubt Philistus, who would certainly not have agreed with Plato and Dion in their view of the best life or the best state.

16. (328 a; p. 68) We know of two nephews of Dion, Hipparinus and Nysaeus, sons of Dionysius the Elder and Aristomache. There were probably many others, for Dion's other sisters were married to Dionysius' brothers (Scholium on Ep. IV). Since Hipparinus would probably have been spoken of rather as Dionysius' brother, it is a reasonable conclusion that he is not specifically referred to in this passage and that we therefore have no evidence here from which the date of his birth can be deduced.

17. (328 c; p. 69) It is the cause of Philosophy to which 'in the second place' Plato fears to prove traitor, though he mentions it only later in Dion's speech.

18. (329 b; p. 71) Since Zeus Xenios was the protector of guests, it would have been a sin against him for Plato not to respond to the plea of Dion, who was bound to him by ties of hospitality.

19. (330 b; p. 72) Here I read *ἴσως δή* which is the more probable manuscript reading. It is equivalent to *δηλαδή*, and the substitution is a characteristic Platonic example of litotes.

20. (330 c; p. 73) The advice that follows was evidently

written later than the rest of the letter and inserted not long before the letter was published.

21. (330 d; p. 73) Here I punctuate as a question.

22. (332 a; p. 76) Constant suspicion even of those nearest him was a trait which Dionysius the Younger apparently inherited from his father; Plutarch (*Life of Dion*, 9) gives examples of the latter's suspicious bearing. The brothers were Thearidas and Leptines.

23. (332 a; p. 76) Compare *Laws* iii. 695 c and Herodotus iii. 89. Was there in existence a didactic work on Darius corresponding to the *Cyropedia* of Xenophon on Cyrus?

24. (332 b; p. 76) The Athenians ruled the Aegean and its coasts for approximately 70 years after 478 B.C. It was part of their policy to maintain in command in the various cities of their empire democratic politicians who could be trusted not to betray those who maintained them. Compare pseudo-Xenophon, *The Athenian Constitution*, i. 4.

25. (331 a; p. 78) Gelo, tyrant of Syracuse, was leader of the Greek forces that defeated the Carthaginians at Himera in 480 B.C.

26. (333 a; p. 78) Here I see no reason for not keeping the ἐπετάξατο of the manuscripts. It is tempting to insert ὅν after τοὐναντίον, and to suppose that Dionysius the Younger surrendered to the Carthaginians as the price of peace the revenue from some of the taxes imposed by his father. It is, however, possible to explain the reference to tribute paid by his father by supposing the indemnity which he agreed to pay in 383 (?) (Diodorus xv. 17. 5) to have been paid in instalments. This is Grote's solution.

27. (333 b; p. 78) It was in 357 that Dion arrived in Sicily on his expedition against Dionysius. For the details see Plutarch's *Life of Dion*.

28. (333 c; p. 79) This paragraph is a digression. Plato is concerned to defend his city and his sect against the charge that from them sprang the murderers of Dion. He introduces his defence by instancing his own loyalty.

29. (333 d; p. 79) This was evidently on the occasion of Plato's first visit.

30. (333 e; p. 79) The brothers were Callippus and Philostratus. For details see Plutarch's *Life of Dion*.

31. (334 d; p. 81) Plato refers to the custom of offering the third libation at banquets to Zeus Saviour. Salvation may be expected on the third attempt.

32. (334 e; p. 81) Dionysius had retired to Italy and was leading a life of pleasure.

33. (335 b; p. 82) Wilamowitz points out the construction of this sentence, which has been mistaken by Apelt and others. *ὁ ἀνὴρ ἁρπάζει πᾶν ὅτιπερ ἂν οἴηται πορισθῆναι αὐτῷ φαγεῖν ἢ πιεῖν ἢ τοὐμπίμπλασθαι περὶ τὴν ἡδονὴν κτλ.*

34. (335 b; p. 82) It is possible to read this sentence as it stands, but Plato expresses himself elsewhere with a clear and rhythmic utterance not found in the words as they are given in the text. Furthermore the *ἀνοσιουργίαι* of the manuscripts must represent some earlier tradition. I propose to read *οὐχ ὁρῶν ὡς συνέπεται τῇ τῶν ἁρπαγμάτων ἀνοσιουργίᾳ κακὸν ἡλίκον ἀεὶ μετ' ἀδικήματος ἑκάστου, ἀναγκαῖον τῷ ἀδικήσαντι κτλ.* After *κακὸν ἡλίκον* there is an ellipsis of *τὸ ἀδίκημα*, 'an evil as great in each case as the wrongdoing'. The ellipsis, unparalleled elsewhere, is similar to the ellipsis of the direct object after *καταβαλεῖ* in 344 c and *ἀπέσωσεν* in 336 b. The accusative or nominative is in each case to be supplied from the dative or genitive that actually occurs. The omission of *τῇ* after *-ται*, the reading of *οἷς* for *ὡς* with *συνέπεται*, which requires a dative, the change of *ἀνοσιουργίᾳ* to a nominative, and the insertion of a relative *ἥν* to mend the grammar are all easy steps in the corruption of a text. The emendation is confirmed by the satisfactory sense and style that result.

35. (336 d; p. 84) Here we have a plea that members of the Academy be not excluded from consideration because Callippus and his brother, who were Athenians, proved traitors and assassins.

36. (337 b; p. 85) Plato's early experiences at Athens are doubtless reflected in this paragraph. He had seen an amnesty put into successful operation after the fall of the thirty in 403.

37. (338 a; p. 87) In *καθάπερ εἶπον* Plato is merely referring back to the statement in 330 c, d, which precedes the inserted advice to Dion's friends.

38. (338 a; p. 87) That is, after the situation described in 330 b. We have here a loose end that was left when the 'advice' was inserted—a loose end that helps to make clear the different strata of the letter.

39. (338 a; p. 87) See Ep. III, 317 a. Except for the plainer statement in Epistle III, the meaning of the present passage could hardly be definitely ascertained. Dionysius was at this period (366) at war with Carthage. He was probably drawn into the Lucanian war later through his relations with Archytas.

40. (339 d; p. 90) Dionysius evidently led the long line of Greek commanders who protected Tarentum against her Italian neighbours.

41. (340 a; p. 91) See note 31.

42. (341 b; p. 93) Here we have a reference to the famous injunction: 'Know thyself.'

43. (342 a; p. 95) Plato is not the only philosopher who has found words inadequate to express his metaphysical speculations. Compare Bradley, *The Principles of Logic*, second edition, page 687: 'Though my principles, I am convinced, are true, they are a long way from my reality; and, though they are certain, yet on the other side I may be at a loss to define them rigidly.'

44. (342 b; p. 95) Surely it need not be argued at length that we have here a succinct and sensible exposition of a view that Plato held. See A. E. Taylor's discussion of this passage in *Mind*, vol. xxi. See also W. Andreae, *Philologus*, June 1922, pp. 34 ff.; and Howald's edition of the *Letters* (Zurich, 1923). The latter refers to Stenzel, *Socrates* (1921), p. 63.

45. (342 b; p. 95) The use of the first person singular here and the word *ἐφθέγμεθα*, 'uttered', a few lines below, mark this passage as being originally part of a verbal lecture to students or to a student. It must have been inserted here by Plato himself.

46. (343 a ; p. 97) That is, a straight line may be drawn tangent to a circle at any point of the circle, so that a circle has parts in common with an infinite number of straight lines.

47. (343 d ; p. 98) Many of the Platonic dialogues illustrate excellently the difficulty, or impossibility, of defining moral concepts.

48. (344 a ; p. 98) Lynceus had a very keen sight himself, but that fact gave him no power to help others. Just so helpless is the philosopher when his pupils are inadequately endowed with spiritual insight. It is precisely the fact that Lynceus was *not* an eye-doctor which gives point to the figure.

49. (344 b ; p. 99) In modern language Plato's ethics had a metaphysical basis.

50. (344 c ; p. 99) The construction of this sentence is regular, once it is understood that Plato for the usual *οὐ μή* substitutes for the sake of emphasis *πολλοῦ δεῖ μή*.

51. (344 d ; p. 99) The quotation is from Homer, *Iliad*, xii. 234.

52. (345 a ; p. 100) Compare *Phaedo* 62 a.

53. (345 c ; p. 101) Plato refers of course to himself. The word *κύριος*, which I translate 'arbiter', varies greatly in its significance. Wilamowitz ingeniously supposes that Plato here uses the expression of himself only by way of retort because Dionysius had already in some controversial writing applied the term to him. It is, however, misleading to suppose that the word has in Plato the religious significance it acquired later. Plato only means that he had a special claim to authority where his doctrine was concerned, just as the begetter of a child or of a work of art might claim a share of any honour bestowed upon his creation.

54. (345 e ; p. 102) The quotation is from Homer, *Odyssey*, xii. 428.

55. (347 b ; p. 104) Dion's status was that of a modern multi-millionaire. His property was sold by Dionysius for much less than its full value, as Plato hints.

56. (348 b ; p. 106) The mercenaries occupied the island

of Ortygia except for the acropolis. Plato was residing in a garden within the walls. Later he was forced to live outside among the mercenaries, so that he was completely at their mercy.

57. (348 b; p. 106) In this vivid account of the escape of Heracleides, Plato is not only explaining how he came to quarrel with Dionysius; he is emphasizing the fact that he was always on the side of the democratic leader against the tyrant. It was about Heracleides that the opposition to Dion later came to a focus, and it was Dion's execution of Heracleides that brought his own downfall.

58. (349 a; p. 107) For the expression compare Menander, *Epitrepontes*, 392, *ὅ δ' ὡς πυκνὰ ἤλλαττε χρώματ', ἄνδρες, οὐδ' εἰπεῖν καλόν.*

59. (350 b; p. 110) This was the festival of 360 B.C.

60. (350 d; p. 111) Compare 326 e for a different attitude toward Dion's expedition. When Plato wrote the fourth letter, he temporarily left the post of neutrality to which he now retires.

61. (351 c; p. 112) Plato is here hinting at the policy of Pericles and his successors at Athens. Doubtless the other methods condemned had been frequently employed in Sicily and elsewhere. There is almost certainly an allusion to Callippus.

62. (351 c; p. 112) Wrongdoing is involuntary, so that, in Plato's view, voluntary action must be right action.

63. (351 e; p. 113) The repeated rhythm and the assonances of this passage produce a powerful effect, which I have attempted to imitate. It is such almost lyric outbursts that prove beyond the possibility of a doubt that we are here face to face with the soul of Plato. In the dialogues we find a literary Plato who sometimes masks the real Plato. In such passages of the letters as this there is no mask. The philosopher may fall from his eminence, but the man is worth knowing. There is more instruction for the man of feeling in the tragedy of Plato, which is unfolded in the letters, than in all the lofty flights of speculation that arouse admiration in the dialogues.

EPISTLE VIII

1. (352 c; p. 117) The friends of Dion are now in control at Syracuse. Hipparinus, Dion's nephew, son of Dionysius the Elder, is their leader. Plato's advice is intended for them, for the Syracusan populace, which rejected the overlordship of Dion equally with that of Dionysius, and for the adherents of Dionysius. The mention of impious crimes is a reference to Callippus, who after murdering Dion had led the Syracusan rabble for thirteen months. He had just surprised Catana, but Hipparinus had seized Syracuse in his absence. The whole letter is a plea for the followers of Dion and of Dionysius to unite and to put down the upstarts who have come into power as representatives of the lowest class of citizens.

2. (352 c; p. 117) Dionysius no longer had a foothold in Sicily. He was ruling at Locri in Italy. The conflicts, of which we have no detailed knowledge, took place between the party of Dion and the party of extreme democracy.

3. (353 a; p. 118) Plato even in his letters prefers to put his message into someone else's mouth. Here he first personifies the prayer (see Ep. XI, 359 b 3) which is the last resort when action is hopeless, and later puts the remainder of his message into the mouth of Dion.

4. (353 b; p. 118) Dionysius and Hipparinus are introduced for the sake of the moral that freedom is sometimes incompatible with safety, and to pave the way for the proposal to make three representatives of the family kings in the new government. Plato emphasizes the part of Hipparinus in the government of Dionysius. Plato is probably right in describing the election of the two men as supreme commanders. It was Dionysius alone, however, who converted his official position into what was popularly known as a tyranny. Hipparinus supported Dionysius and was content to accept his control of affairs. The moneyed classes in general favoured Dionysius in return for the security which they enjoyed.

5. (353 e; p. 119) A few years later the Carthaginians actually threatened to become completely masters of Sicily (Plutarch, *Life of Timoleon*, 11). The Opici are the peoples

of central Italy who were pressing southward at this time. Plato had seen a great deal of them in Syracuse where they served as mercenaries. They were later called Campanians. When Timoleon arrived in Sicily (345 B.C.) they occupied Entella, Aetna, and Catana at least (Diodorus xvi. 67), and doubtless threatened equally with the Carthaginians to overrun Sicily completely. It is hardly necessary to refute the view that this passage reflects the situation of a century later.

6. (354 b; p. 120) Here I accept Wilamowitz's emendation and read *τὴν τῶν ἐφόρων*.

7. (354 e; p. 121) Plato's statement that the ten generals were stoned to death is due to a lapse of memory. The generals stoned were of Agrigentum and were four in number (Diodorus xiii. 87. 5).

8. (355 b; p. 122) For this triple classification see *Gorgias* 477 c, *Laws* 697 b and 726 a.

9. (355 c; p. 122) For the statement that the best laws are those that make those ruled by them happy, see *Laws* 631 b. Plato frequently protests against the use of the word *εὐδαίμων* to mean wealthy.

10. (355 e; p. 123) A careful study of this letter leads to the conclusion that Plato could speak as he does here only of an infant. The other two kings proposed are discussed. Much is made of their names and of their descent. Hipparinus is praised for a devotion to justice that proved only temporary, while the possibility of Dionysius' reforming received rather more attention than seems to have been warranted. Of Dion's son we hear not a word. He had no qualities to praise or to reform. Neither had he a name that would be useful to support his claim; or, if he had, his name was not known to Plato. It is incredible that Plutarch's statement should not be true in regard to the death of the son of Dion mentioned (not by name) in Ep. VII, 345 c (*Life of Dion*, 55). It is also incredible that Plato should not have known a year after the death of Dion that his only son had died before his father. The only possible hypothesis is precisely the one that fits the silence of Plato in this passage and his silence about Dion's son in the seventh Epistle, namely, that the son here

mentioned was Dion's posthumous son, born to Arete in prison and rescued by Hipparinus. That the existence of a son of Dion was a matter of political importance is proved by the action of Hicetas in putting him out of the way. (See Plutarch, *Life of Timoleon*, 33.) A strong confirmation of this view is found in Plutarch's failure to mention any disagreement between his account and the evidence of Plato's Letters. Since he elsewhere calls attention to any such disagreement it is practically certain that he saw none and that he interpreted the passages cited as I have done.

There are two objections to the view I have here stated, but neither of them is insuperable. In Ep. VII, 324 a 7, is mentioned a Hipparinus who has the age in 353 that Dion had in 388. It has been supposed that this Hipparinus must necessarily be the son of Dion on account of the age mentioned (twenty years old). We may urge in reply, however, that, if Dion's son had been meant, Plato would certainly have said so, and that Plato must have known of the death of Dion's son, or he would have mentioned him elsewhere in the letter. Neither is there any difficulty in supposing that Plato might have spoken as he does of Hipparinus, son of Dionysius, even if he were born as early as 378—which is a not improbable date in spite of the indecisive reference in Ep. VII, 328 a. The other objection is the language used in this letter, 357 c. The objection is serious; yet Plato's proposals in this letter are so fantastic in general (from the point of view of practical wisdom) that such a touch as this really seems consistent with his other proposals. See also note 12 and my article, *A supposed historical discrepancy in the Platonic epistles*, Am. Journal of Philology, Dec. 1924.

11. (356 b; p. 124) Here I accept Wilamowitz's conjecture *τάφων*.

12. (356 b; p. 124) The three kings are all representatives of the party of monarchy. Thus the party of freedom is to be left unrepresented, but protected by constitutional restraints. Naturally such a proposal could not be acceptable to the Sicilian multitude. Plato still sees a faint chance of establishing an ideal commonwealth in Sicily. He puts his faith in

the two kings who will together outvote Dionysius. Hipparinus seems already to have taken the path of justice, while Dion's infant son may well inherit the noble qualities of his father and so welcome the education that will make of him a philosopher king.

13. (357 a; p. 125) A parallel to these proposals is found in Plato's *Laws*. See 752 e, 767 c, d, and 855 c. In fact we need the fuller statement found in the *Laws* to explain what is obscure in the present passage.

14. (357 a; p. 125) A reference to Callippus and his brother, first friends, then murderers of Dion.

EPISTLE VI

1. (322 d; p. 128) For the thought compare Ep. VII, 332 c.

2. (322 d; p. 128) The puzzling phrase, *καίπερ γέρων ὤν*, has no plain meaning. Isocrates, however, has a perfect mania for referring apologetically to his old age, though there are no riddles caused by brevity in his works. The monosyllabic echo in *γέρων ὤν* is so characteristic of Plato's later style, in this feature quite antagonistic to the popular taste, that it points to him rather than anyone else as the writer. It may be a conventional apology for writing at all in old age or for his interest in worldly matters when so near death. For Isocrates see especially *Antidosis*, 11 (*καίπερ τηλικοῦτος ὤν*).

3. (323 b; p. 129) Plato also refers to the fickleness of human nature in Ep. VII, 335 e.

4. (323 c; p. 129) With this phrase compare Ep. VII, 336 c.

5. (323 c; p. 129) Here I read *δικαίῳ*.

6. (323 d; p. 129) For the union of jest and earnest compare *Laws* 803 c.

7. (323 d; p. 129) Much the same language is used in *Laws* 896 of *ψυχή* in general (see also *Timaeus* 28 c). Since Plato is here writing an intimate letter he can allude specifically to his belief in one god (*νοῦς*), the reason that orders the world. By the ruling active principle I understand the soul

of the universe and of man (ψυχή), of which reason is the noblest element.

8. (323 d; p. 129) Plato is only repeating briefly the doctrine that philosophic training (which includes discipline of the body) purifies the soul and enables it to attain a view of the ideal world and of the idea of the good. (See *Republic* vi. 508.)

9. (323 d; p. 129) For Plato's peculiar use of the word εὐδαίμων to mean, not *wealthy* but *subject to reason*, see Ep. VIII, 354 c and 355 c.

HAR SINGH COLLEGE
No:

INDEX OF PROPER NAMES

Aegina, island near Athens, IV 321 b, p. 43.
Aeschines, philosopher, 25, 142.
Aeschylus, *Prometheus*, 141.
Aetna, city of Sicily, 156.
Agamemnon, Homeric hero, II 311 b, p. 29; 141.
Agrigentum, city of Sicily, 156.
Alexander of Macedon, 116.
Alexander of Pherae, 37, 143.
Amorgus, Aegean island, XIII 363 a, p. 23.
Anaxagoras, early philosopher, II 311 a, p. 29.
Andreae, 12, 152.
Andromedes of Aegina, XIII 362 b, p. 21.
Apelt, 12, 130, 151.
Aphrodite, goddess of love, VII 335 b, p. 82.
Apollo, god of Delphi, III 315 b, p. 46; XIII 361 a, p. 19; 139.
Apollocrates, son of Dionysius II, 14, 139.
Arcadia, region of Peloponnesus, 140.
Archedemus, Sicilian pupil of Archytas, 26; II 310 b, p. 27; 312 d, p. 32; 313 d, e, p. 34; III 319 a, p. 53; 339 a, p. 89; 349 d, p. 108.
Archidamus, king of Sparta, 3.
Archippus, IX 357 e, p. 136.
Archytas, celebrated mathematician, philosopher, and statesman of Tarentum, 8; XIII 360 b, p. 18; 25 f; VII 338 c, p. 88; 339 a, d, p. 89 f; 350 a, p. 109; IX 357 d, p. 136; XII 359 c, p. 137; 139, 152.
Arete, wife and niece of Dion, 10, 14, 114, 140, 157.
Argos, city of Peloponnesus, VIII 354 b, p. 120.
Aristippus of Cyrene, philosopher, 25, 142.

Aristocritus, Syracusan follower of Plato, III 319 a, p. 53; XIII 363 d, p. 24.
Aristodorus, companion of Dion, X 358 c, p. 40.
Aristomache, sister of Dion, 14, 147, 149.
Ariston, II 314 e, p. 36.
Aristophanes, *Ecclesiazousae*, 148.
Aristotle, philosopher, 11, 148.
Atarneus, city of Asia Minor, 127.
Athenaeus, 133.
Athens, Athenian, *passim*.

Baccheius, I 309 c, p. 131.
Bentley, 2, 12.
Billig, 12.
Bradley, 152.
Brinkman, 127.
Bryson, sophist, XIII 360 c, p. 19.
Burnet, 2, 12.

Callippus, murderer of Dion, 9, 10, 57 f, 114, 151, 154 f, 158.
Campanians, 10, 156.
Carthage, Carthaginians, 8, 10, 15 f, 25 f; VII 333 a, p. 78; 349 c, p. 108; VIII 353 a, p. 118, 150, 152, 155 f.
Catana, city of Sicily, 155 f.
Cebes, character of *Phaedo*, XIII 363 a, p. 23.
Celts, mercenaries of Dionysius, 10.
Charmides, uncle of Plato, 147.
Charybdis, whirlpool at Messine, VII 345 e, p. 102.
Cicero, Roman orator, 1, 3, 15.
Cobet, 1.
Corinth, city of Greece, III 318 a, p. 51.
Coriscus, pupil of Plato, 127; VI 322 f, p. 127 f.
Corsica, 4.
Cratinus, brother of Timotheus, XIII 363 a, p. 23.
Cratistolus, II 310 c, p. 28.
Creon, legendary king of Thebes, II 311 b, p. 29; 141.
Critias, leader of the thirty tyrants, 147 f.
Croesus, king of Lydia, II 311 a, p. 29; 141.

Cyrus, king of Persia, II 311 a, p. 29; IV, 320 d, p. 42; 141, 144.
Cyzicus, city of Asia Minor, XIII 360 c, p. 18.

Darius, king of Persia, VII 332 a, p. 76; 144, 150.
Datos, colony in Thrace, 37.
Delphi, site of Apollo's oracle, III 315 b; 46.
Dikaiosyne, sister of Dionysius II, 14.
Diodorus Siculus, 141, 150, 156.
Dion, pupil of Plato, *passim*.
Dionysius I, the Elder, tyrant of Syracuse, 3, 6, 14; II 313 a, p. 32; VII 327 b, p. 67; 332 c, p. 75; 115; VIII 353 b, p. 118; 354 b, p. 121; 356 a, p. 123; 356 b, c, p. 124; 357 c, p. 126; 140, 147, 149, 155.
Dionysius II, the Younger, *passim*.
Doris, wife of Dionysius I, 14; II 313 a, p. 32.

Echecrates, pupil of Archytas, IX 358 b, p. 137.
Elis, region of Peloponnesus, 140.
Entella, city of Sicily, 156.
Erastus, pupil of Plato, XIII 362 a, p. 21; 127; VI 322 f, p. 127 f.
Eudoxus of Cnidus, astronomer, XIII 360 c, p. 18; 139.
Euphraeus, pupil of Plato, 133; V 321 d, e, p. 134.
Euripides, quoted, I 309 d, p. 131: *Palamedes*, 141; *Polyidus*, 141.
Eurybius of Syracuse, III 318 c, p. 52; VII 348 e, p. 107.
Eurymenes, brother of Dion, 14.

Gelo, tyrant of Syracuse, VII 333 a, p. 78; 144, 150.
Glaucon, brother of Plato, 147.
Greece, Greek, *passim*.
Grote, 1, 5, 12, 150.

Hackforth, 12, 15.
Harward, 12.
Hegesippus, II 314 e, p. 36.
Helen of Troy, 146.
Helicon, astronomer, 8; XIII 360 c, p. 18; 25, 139.

Heracleides, popular leader at Syracuse, 9; IV 320 e, p. 42; 321 b, p. 43; 45; III 318 c, p. 52; 319 a, p. 53; 57, 58; VII 348 f, p. 106 f; 144, 154.
Hermias, tyrant of Atarneus, 127; VI 322 f, p. 127 ff.
Hermocrates, father of Dionysius I, 14.
Hermocritus, son of Dionysius I, 14.
Herodotus, 141.
Hesiod, quoted, XI 359 a, p. 38; 144.
Hicetas, friend of Dion, 10, 57, 116, 157.
Hiero, tyrant of Syracuse, II 311 a, p. 28; VII 336 a, p. 83; 141, 144.
Himera, city of Sicily, 150.
Hipparinus, father of Dion, 14, 115 f; VIII 353 b, p. 118; 354 b, p. 121; 356 c, p. 124; 155.
Hipparinus Aretaeus, son of Dion, 9, 14, 157.
Hipparinus, nephew of Dion, 10, 14, 57 f; VII 324 a, b, p. 62; 114; VIII 357 c, p. 126; 146 f, 149, 155 f.
Homer, 141, 153.
Howald, 12, 142, 152.

Iatrocles, freedman of Plato, XIII 363 e, p. 24.
Iberians in Dionysius' army, 10.
Isocrates, famous rhetorician, XIII 360 c, p. 18; 58 ff, 114, 140, 158; *Antidosis*, 3, 58 ff; *Epistles*, 3.
Italy, Italian, *passim*.

Krenidae, colony in Thrace, 37.

Lacedaemon, region of Peloponnesus, IV 321 b, p. 43.
Lamiscus of Tarentum, VII 350 a, p. 109.
Laodamas of Thasos, statesman, XI 358 d, p. 37.
Laomedon, XII 359 d, p. 137.
Leochares, famous sculptor, XIII 361 a, p. 19.
Leon of Salamis, 147.
Leontini, city of Sicily, 9, 10, 57 f, 116, 147.
Leptines, brother of Dionysius I, 14, 150.
Leptines of Syracuse, friend of Plato, XIII 361 a, b, p. 19, 20; 362 b, p. 22; 363 c, d, p. 24; 140.

Ligurians in Dionysius' army, 10.
Locri, city of Italy, 10; XIII 360 a, p 18; 115, 155.
Lucanians, people of Italy, 8, 26, 152.
Lycophron, sophist, II 314 d, p. 35.
Lycurgus, lawgiver of Sparta, IV 320 d, p. 42; VIII 354 b, p. 120; 144.
Lynceus, hero of legend famed for sharp sight, VII 344 a, p. 98; 153.
Lysias, orator, 147.
Lysicleides, II 315 a, p. 36.

Megacles, brother of Dion, 14.
Megara, city near Athens, VII 329 a, p. 70.
Menander, *Epitrepontes*, 154.
Messene, region of Peloponnesus, VIII 354 b, p. 120.
Meyer, 2, 12.
Milton, 5.
Minos, legendary ruler of Crete, II 311 b, p. 29; 141.
Myrians, XII 359 d, p. 137.
Myronides, freedman of Plato, XIII 363 e, p. 24.

Nestor, Homeric hero, II 311 b, p. 29; 141.
Nysaeus, nephew of Dion, 10, 14, 149.

Odysseus, Homeric hero, II 311 b, p. 29.
Olympia, Olympic games, 9, 26; II 310 d, p. 28; VII 350 b, p. 110.
Opici, people of Italy, VIII 353 e, p. 119; 155.
Ortygia, island citadel of Syracuse, 154.

Palamedes, epic hero, II 311 b, p. 29; 141.
Paul of Tarsus, *Epistles*, 3, 4.
Pausanias, victor of Plataeae, II 311 a, p. 28.
Peloponnesus, region of Greece, VII 333 b, p. 78; 336 d, p. 84; 345 c, p. 101; 346 b, p. 102; 348 c, p. 106; 350 b, p. 110.
Perdiccas, king of Macedon, 133; V 321 c.

Periander, tyrant of Corinth, II 311 a, p. 29.
Pericles, Athenian statesman, II 311 a, p. 29; 154.
Persia, VII 332 b, p. 76.
Phalaris, Letters of, 2.
Philaedes, XIII 363 b, p. 24.
Philagrus, XIII 363 b, p. 24.
Philip of Macedon, 3, 133.
Philistion of Locri, physician, II 314 d, e, p. 36.
Philistus (Philistides), 7; III 315 e, p. 47; 130, 145, 149.
Philonides, IX 357 e, p. 136.
Philostratus, brother of Callippus, 151.
Phoenicians, VIII 353 e, p. 119.
Phrynion, IX 358 b, p. 137.
Piraeus, port of Athens, VII 324 c, p. 62.
Plato, *passim*; *Apology*, 59; *Gorgias*, 148, 156; *Laws*, 3, 5, 127, 144, 145, 156, 158; *Phaedo*, 140, 143, 153; *Politicus*, 139; *Republic*, 40, 142 f, 148 f, 159; *Sophistes*, 139; *Timaeus*, 127, 139, 158.
Plutarch, 1, 5, 17, 25, 44, 116, 140, 145, 156.
Polyidus, legendary seer, II 311 b, p. 29; 141.
Polyxenus, sophist, XIII 360 c, p. 18; 26; II 310 c, p. 28; 314 c, p. 35; 140.
Prometheus, mythological character, II 311 b, p. 29; 141.
Pythagorean, II 360 b, p. 18; 136, 143.

Richards, 12, 139, 144, 149.
Ritter, 2, 12, 15.
Rousseau, Jean Jacques, 4.

Scepsis, city of Asia Minor, 127.
Scylla, monster at straits of Messina, VII 345 e, p. 102.
Sicily, *passim*.
Simmias, character in *Phaedo*, XIII 363 a, p. 23.
Simonides, lyric poet, II 311 a, p. 28; 141.
Socrates, pupil of Plato, 37; XI 358 d, e, p. 38.
Socrates, teacher of Plato, XIII 363 a, p. 23; II 314 e, p. 35; VII 324 d, e, p. 63; 325 b, p. 64; 142, 147 f.
Solon, poet and statesman, II 311 a, p. 29; 141.

Sophocles, *Antigone* and *Oedipus Tyrannus*, 141.
Sophrosyne, daughter of Dionysius I, 14, 139.
Speusippus, nephew of Plato, XIII 361 e, p. 21; II 314 e, p. 36; 143.
Stenzel, 152.
Stesichorus of Himera, lyric poet, III 319 e, p. 55; 146.
Strabo, geographer, 127.
Syracuse, *passim*.

Tarentum, city of Italy, 8, 9; VII 338 c, p. 88; 339 d, e, p. 90; 350 a, p. 109; 152.
Taylor, 12, 152.
Terillus, XIII 363 c, p. 24.
Thales of Miletus, philosopher, II 311 a, p. 29.
Thasos, Aegean island, 37.
Thearidas, brother of Dionysius I, 14, 150.
Thebes, city near Athens, 148.
Theodotes, connexion of Heracleides, IV 320 e, p. 42; 58; 321 b, p. 43; III 318 c, p. 52; VII 348 f, p. 106 f; 144.
Theramenes, Athenian politician, 148.
Thrace, 37.
Thucydides, historian, 148.
Timoleon of Corinth, statesman, 156.
Timotheus, pupil of Isocrates, XIII 363 a, p. 23; 59 f, 140.
Tiresias, legendary seer, II 311 b, p. 29; 141.
Tisias, officer of Dionysius II, VII 349 c, p. 108.
Tison, Syracusan official, XIII 363 c, p. 24.
Trojans, XII 359 d, p. 137.

Voltaire, 5, 11.

Wilamowitz, 2, 12, 144, 151, 153, 156 f.
Wilson, Woodrow, 144.

Xenophon, 148; *Athenian Constitution*, 150; *Constitution of Sparta*, 144; *Cyropaedia*, 144, 150; *Hiero*, 141; *Memorabilia*, 147.

Zeus, II 311 b, p. 29; VII 329 b, p. 71; 334 d, p. 81; 350 b, p. 110; 141, 149, 151.

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